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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-088 *6 May 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Al-Asad, Saddam Reportedly Meet on Border

JN0305111996 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 3 May 96 pp 30, 31

[Report by Walid Abu-Zahr]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As I was preparing to close shop and leave for home, I received a phone call from an AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI correspondent in an Arab capital. He told me that he was certain that a meeting took place between Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. This was all the information he could give me. He left me to worry and follow up on what he told me. Of course, he went home and thought no more of this, while I remained restless like the monk who, during a visit to a friend, was asked by that friend whether he keeps his beard above or below the blanket when he sleeps. The monk passed a sleepless night first putting his beard above the blanket and then under it, to see which position was more comfortable.

This was exactly how I felt that night. I was unable to sleep and passed the entire night thinking about whether this report could be true. One cannot always contact friends who are conversant with the state of affairs in Iraq at any time. I started looking for one of these friends, but to no avail. My phone calls remained unanswered. Of course, in such sensitive cases, you cannot say who is calling or ask those who pick up the phone to tell the friend to call me back when he gets home.

I worried about all this while keeping in mind the approaching deadline for the next issue, what with the 'Id holidays and the need to prepare everything for the printers before Thursday [2 May]. I had no time left. I wondered whether I should not leave this topic for the issue that will be published after the 'Id.

What made things worse was that in addition to all my worries, I had toothache. The dentist gave me a painkiller which made me sleepy. No sooner had the painkiller began to take effect than I was awakened by the telephone ringing at 3 A.M. I lifted the receiver to hear the voice of a friend whom I had not called that night. He told me: Abu-Khalid, have you heard the latest news?

I asked him what news? He said: Do you know that Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Saddam Husayn met on the Syrian-Iraqi borders?

I suddenly became wide awake. The telephone conversation was a lengthy one during which I was briefed on all the details of the meeting and what took place in it. I now will relate as faithfully as I can what I was told without any retouches.

The night before the meeting, the desert area to the north of Tall Kujik in al-Qamishli province on the Syrian-Iraqi-Turkish border triangle through which the Euphrates passes witnessed unprecedented security activities and movements on both sides of the Syrian-Iraqi borders. The inhabitants on both sides of the borders were asked to stay away from the area. Security men in civilian clothes, were deployed in that area. They set up checkpoints and isolated the area from its surroundings. The inhabitants were not surprised at this activity as they believed it was just an operation to control security in that area which is inhabited by a mixture of Kurds and Arabs. Workers toiled diligently through the night to build a large tent. They supplied it with electricity from a power generator they had brought with them on a Syrian truck carrying the licence plates of one of the Syrian secret services.

Early the next day, shepherds in the area saw a convoy of black Mercedes cars with a military and security escort moving toward the tent through al-Hasakah-Dayr al-Zawr road while on the opposite side another convoy of the same type of cars also with a military and security escort was also moving toward the tent.

Presidents Al-Asad and Saddam Husayn stepped down from two cars which arrived at the tent at the same time, and immediately went into the tent, accompanied by some of their aides.

Some of what took place in the tent is no longer a secret to the monitoring agencies in important capitals. President al-Asad began the meeting by speaking of the mistakes of the pan-Arab charter the two countries signed in 1979 and how the conspiracy to foil this charter succeeded.

The discussion then touched on the threats engulfing the Arab nation. Although President al-Asad briefly mentioned that the deterioration in the Arab state of affairs began with the invasion of Kuwait, these remarks did not affect the positive atmosphere prevailing the meeting. President al-Asad said that most of the western world now views the Arab world as a dead body and they seek to distribute the bounty this nation presents.

President al-Asad warned that the Turkish-Israeli agreement and the strategic cooperation agreement between Israel and the United States represented a return to the policy of alliances. He said that Syria sensed the danger facing the entire Arab nation. He noted that the Israeli move toward Turkey was paralleled by an Israeli-U.S. move toward Bab al-Mandeb Strait, specifically al-Hanish al-Kabir island. He questioned the meaning

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behind the U.S. maneuvers with Eritrea, which does not have an army that can be called an army.

President al-Asad said he also feared that the Israeli operation in Lebanon was just a rehearsal for a bigger operation. The objective of this operation was to create a new reality in the Middle East, through which the Arab nation would lose all its importance as a strategic location, which became subject to Israeli-Turkish-U.S. hegemony in the Mediterranean and Red Sea. He said that the water weapon was also being strongly used against the Arabs, noting Turkey's projects on the Euphrates River, which harm Syrian and Iraqi interests.

President Saddam agreed with this analysis, but was keener to view the presence of Israeli warplanes in Turkey as being aimed against Iran and not Iraq. However, he noted that the Iraqi people were being subjected to an international campaign of annihilation by starving them without justification after Baghdad had complied with international resolutions.

Expressing his opinion, President Saddam said that the Israeli aggression against Lebanon should have been confronted in a stronger way so that the Arab nation would not look weak in defending its interests. He said it was necessary to turn over a new page and return to a minimum level of Arab solidarity.

The two leaders agreed that Arab solidarity was needed now more than ever before. They explored the possibilities for cooperation between their countries without officially announcing the opening of the borders to avoid any inappropriately timed international sensitivity that this could raise. They saw that the peoples of both countries could cooperate from both sides of the borders without need for official resolutions.

The two presidents admitted that there were many problems and complications between them which needed to be ironed out in more than one session and with the participation of other officials at all levels. They, however, agreed that solving these problems would be in the interest of the entire Arab nation.

The friend on the telephone stopped giving more details and told me that the meeting lasted for 90 minutes. The two motorcades left the tent at the same time, each returning to its capital. Soon after that, the tent was removed and the security men left the area as if nothing had happened.

Two things drew my attention. This friend was not among those I called. Indeed, he volunteered to call. Moreover, I did not ask him about the meeting. He volunteered to tell me, without leaving room for a question.

Two questions came to my mind: Did Iraq leak the news as a test balloon, hoping for some reaction? Or, are there international quarters that learned about the secret meeting and want to contain its results by disseminating it to the public?

Both are valid possibilities. However, there is no doubt that this meeting will raise much controversy. Although this was a preliminary meeting to reinvigorate the cool relations between the two capitals, there are those in the region and in the international arenas who fear that if Damascus and Baghdad follow up the results of the meeting, this will lead to actual rapprochement between them. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns From 'Historic' U.S. Visit

JN0305133996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the homeland from the United States a short while ago. He concluded a visit which was characterized as historic and successful. President 'Arafat met with U.S. President Bill Clinton, the World Bank director, and the UN secretary general. The president also met in New York with the Palestinian community in the United States.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Terms U.S., Egypt Visits 'Positive,' 'Constructive'

JN0305191496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 May 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat is currently holding a meeting with Qatari Justice Minister Najib Muhammad al-Nu'aymi at the Presidential office in Gaza. The meeting is expected to address the Palestinian-Qatari relations and the means of boosting them on all levels as well as the Qatari support for the Palestinian people. The two sides are also expected to discuss the latest developments in the peace process in the region.

President 'Arafat returned home this afternoon following a fruitful visit to Egypt and the United States. President 'Arafat described the visit as positive and constructive. After his arrival in the Presidential Office in Gaza, 'Arafat said that he discussed with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington the overall peace process, the means of advancing it, and the hardships the Palestinians are encountering due to the Israeli practices, the

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military siege on the Palestinian territories, and the collective punishments. 'Arafat said that a joint Palestinian-U.S. committee was formed at a high level to discuss all political, economic, and social issues.

'Arafat also held constructive talks with the president of the World Bank. He announced that an urgent $40 million loan agreement was signed with the World Bank. He said that $20 million of the loan will be paid immediately, while the remaining amount will be paid after two weeks. The loan is to be used to create job opportunities for those who lost their jobs due to the Israeli siege.

'Arafat also spoke about his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. He said they discussed the importance of embarking on the final-status talks immediately, in addition to the problems that arise in Hebron Governorate.

President 'Arafat also met in New York with UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali. The president said that he discussed with Butrus- Ghali the need for an active UN presence in the areas where settlements are being forged as well as the need to advance the peace process on the Palestinian and Arab tracks.

President 'Arafat described his meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo as fruitful and positive.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Sources' Reveal 'Secrets' of 'Arafat Visit to Washington

JN0605100296 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 6 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that during his visit to Washington last week, Yasir 'Arafat failed to persuade President Bill Clinton and U.S. Administration officials to announce a new and more positive stand on the issue of Palestinian statehood.

Sources close to the delegation that accompanied 'Arafat on his Washington visit told AL-MAJD that 'Arafat had hoped to obtain a political and economic reward from the U.S. President in return for the role he played in revoking the Palestinian National Charter. However, Clinton did not budge from the well-known U.S. stand, which stipulates that any future development of the self-rule authority is contingent upon the outcome of the final-status talks between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority.

The sources indicated that 'Arafat was extremely disappointed, because he felt that the U.S. Administration and U.S. President Clinton were eager to use all Palestinian concessions, including the revocation of the National Charter, to the advantage of Shim'on Peres in order to promote the Labor Party's prospects in the upcoming Knesset elections. 'Arafat had hoped that the revocation of the charter would produce some political gains as well as some financial aid for the Palestinians.

'Arafat's hopes were raised when the U.S. president accorded him a reception similar to those accorded to heads of state. However, their closed meeting in Washington did not produce any breakthroughs. Their talks failed to remove U.S. reservations on the creation of an independent Palestinian state even though the Israeli Labor Party dropped such reservations from its political platform in late April.

The sources revealed the secrets behind 'Arafat's visit to Washington. They informed AL-MAJD that 'Arafat rejected a U.S. offer to enter into negotiations with Jordan with a view to creating a federation rather than confederation between Jordan and a Palestinian entity that would not rise to the level of a fully sovereign independent state.

The sources added that Egypt, which was asked by Washington to relay this offer to 'Arafat approximately one month ago, advised 'Arafat to expedite the amendment of the National Charter and visit Washington to open a direct dialogue with the highest U.S. political echelons. Egypt informed 'Arafat that it would do its utmost to facilitate the materialization of such a visit, and that it would remove any difficulties that could stand in the way of such a visit.

Concluding, the sources said that 'Arafat, who rejected the U.S. offer and insisted, at Egypt's behest, on a confederation with Jordan, fabricated a string of crises and disputes with Jordan to provoke it into rejecting any form of relationship with the Palestinian side so that it may be blamed by the U.S. Administration. Nonetheless, the Jordanian officials, who appear to have been aware and supportive of what is in the back of the Americans' mind, failed to be provoked by 'Arafat's accusations. They demonstrated the patience of Job to thwart his plans.

In a separate development, AL-MAJD learned that political and personal sensitivities between 'Arafat and Mahmud 'Abbas, whom 'Arafat accuses of being pro-Jordan, has recently reached a peak. 'Arafat is apprehensive that 'Abbas could serve as his substitute in leading a Palestinian entity in a future federation with Jordan.

Those privy to the secrets of the Palestinian power struggle believe that 'Arafat is working hard to replace Mahmud 'Abbas, who is at the forefront of the Palestinian political scene, by Hani al-Hasan. Moreover, 'Arafat appears to be reducing the powers of Major General Nasr

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Yusuf, who is also pro-Jordan, in favor of Ghazi al-Jabali and 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Majayidah, senior security officers in the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinian Affairs: Cabinet Discusses Final-Status Talks, Other Issues

JN0405152196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 May 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its weekly meeting chaired by President Yasir 'Arafat at the presidential headquarters in Gaza today, the Council of Ministers of the National Authority discussed a number of important issues.

The cabinet decided to import flour directly from Egypt and Jordan. The National Authority will provide Palestinian traders with flour at international prices without allowing any exploitation.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat said the Council of Ministers discussed the final-status negotiations to be held in the Taba, Egypt on Sunday [5 May] evening. He emphasized that these negotiations should be serious and real. He said the Palestinian side does not expect much from tomorrow's meeting, but this meeting is a qualitative start for a new stage of the peace process.

He added that the objective of the final-status negotiations is to realize an independent Palestinian state. He said that this is the realistic solution and that there is no other solution other than the two-state solution — a Palestinian state and an Israeli state.

The cabinet approved a working plan for starting the final-status negotiations. Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the Palestinian delegation to the final-status negotiations, said there will be an exchange of speeches tomorrow that will be followed by a closed meeting.

He said the issues that will be discussed are the six final- status topics — Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, borders, prisoners, and foreign relations. The issue of water will also be discussed.

Dr. Nabil Sha'th said he rejects the price set for a sack of flour at 120 shekels, and emphasized that this will be a burden on Palestinian citizens because of the economic circumstances they are experiencing as a result of the Israeli military siege. Dr. Sha'th emphasized that the National Authority seeks to realize economic independence.

The Council of Ministers discussed Israeli violations of the concluded agreements, especially those related to the siege and redeployment in Hebron Governorate, which the Peres government decided to postpone until after the Israeli elections.

President 'Arafat briefed the Council of Ministers on the results of his visits to Egypt and the United States. He discussed his talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo, and his talks in Washington with U.S President Bill Clinton and Israeli President Shim'on Peres. President 'Arafat also briefed the Council of Ministers on the results of his talks with UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali and World Bank President James Wolfensohn.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas To Head Final-Status Talks With Israel

JN0505065996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Final-status negotiations with the Israeli Government will begin in the Egyptian resort of Taba this evening. The negotiations will include the issues of Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and borders. Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Legislative Council, and Yo'el Singer, legal adviser for the Israeli Government will meet in Elat shortly before the inauguration of the talks to agree on the negotiations agenda.

During its weekly meeting yesterday, the cabinet discussed the arrangements made for these negotiations. Mahmud 'Abbas, member of the PLO Executive Committee, said the negotiations will be difficult and long, but herald a new phase leading to the establishment of the Palestinian state.

The Palestinian delegation to these negotiations is led by Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, and includes Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, and Colonel Muhammad Dahlan as members. The Israeli delegation is led by Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Letter to Peres; PNC Resolution on Charter

TA0505161996 (Internet) Israel Information Service in English 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

LETTER FROM PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY PRESIDENT YASIR 'ARAFAT TO PRIME MINISTER SHIM'ON PERES MAY 4, 1996 Mr. Shim'on Peres Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Mr. Peres, I convey my best wishes to your excellency, and I would like to convey to you the recent historic resolution adopted by the Palestinian National Council [PNC] at its 21st session held in Gaza city.

As part of our commitment to the peace process, and in adhering to the mutual recognition between

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the Palestinian Liberation Organization [PLO] and the Government of Israel, the P.N.C. was held in Gaza city between 22-25 of April 1996, and in an extraordinary session decided that the Palestine National Charter is hereby amended by cancelling the provisions that are contrary to the letters exchanged between the P.L.O. and the government of Israel on 9/10 Sept. 1993.

Please find enclosed copies of the official Arabic and English texts of the P.N.C.'s resolutions.

We remain committed to the peace process. [Dated] Gaza: 4/5/1996 [Signed] Yasir 'Arafat Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. President of the Palestinian National Authority

OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

The Palestinian National Council, at its 21st session held in the city of Gaza,

Emanating from the declaration of independence and the political statement adopted at its 19th session held in Algiers on Nov. 15, 1988, which affirmed the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means and accepted the two states solution,

And based on the introduction of the Declaration of Principles [DOP] signed in Washington D.C. on 13 September 1993, which included the agreement of both sides to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict and to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security, while recognizing their mutual legitimate and political right,

And reaffirming their desire to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process,

And based on international legitimacy represented by the United Nations Resolutions relevant to the Palestinian question, including those relating to Jerusalem, Refugees and Settlements, and the other issues of the permanent status and the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338,

And affirming the adherence of the Palestine Liberation Organization to its commitments deriving from the D.O.P. (Oslo 1), the provisional Cairo Agreement, the letter of mutual recognition signed on 9 and 10 September 1993, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo 2) signed in Washington D.C. on 28 September 1995, and reconfirm the resolution of the central Council of the P.L.O. adopted in October 1993, which approved the Oslo Agreement and all its annexes,

And based on the principles which constituted the foundation of the Madrid Peace Conference and the Washington negotiations, decides:

1. The Palestinian National Charter is hereby amended by canceling the articles that are contrary to the letters exchanged between the P.L.O. and the Government of Israel 9-10 September 1993.

2. Assigns its legal committee with the task of redrafting the Palestinian National Charter in order to present it to the first session of the Palestinian central council.

Palestinian Affairs: Speaker Quray' Discusses Jerusalem, Jordan, Denies Secret Talks

NC0305190996 London MBC Television in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 May 96

[Interview via satellite with Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, in Jerusalem by Nidal Qabalan in London and Muhammad al-Shinnawi in Washington; from the "Dialogue With the West" program—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Qabalan] Abu-al-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'], speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, what is the background on President Yasir' Arafat's remark yesterday that Jerusalem will be the capital of the upcoming Palestinian state, whether people like it or not? Do you have any U.S. guarantees to this effect, or are these merely press statements?

[Quray'] These are not merely press statements. This is the Palestinian position. No peace can be established without Jerusalem being the capital of the Palestinian state. I also promise you that there will be no peace while there are Israeli settlements or settlement activity; there will be no peace if there is no sovereign Palestinian state; and there will be no peace if the refugee problem is not solved fairly. All previous agreements are only transitional, temporary ones, and they are called as such. They prepare the search for a solution to the Palestinian problem and the Palestinian-Israeli and Arab-Israeli conflict from all aspects. It is such a solution that will open the way for the so-called new Middle East. Without a just solution to the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people, there will be no peace, and the new Middle East which some people dream of and plan for will not be established. Israel will be a member of a new Middle East only when it returns Palestinian rights and when the Palestinian state is established with Jerusalem as its capital. Without this, there will be no peace. [passage omitted]

[Al-Shinnawi] Abu-al-'Ala', you were the engineer of the secret talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis

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in Oslo. According to press reports here, secret talks are now underway between Shim'on Peres' advisers and Palestinian officials to work out arrangements under which Jerusalem will be a unified capital for both Palestinians and Israelis. Is it possible to return to secret diplomacy to settle such sensitive issues?

[Quray'] I can assure you that there is absolutely no need for secret negotiations. Some meetings may be held, but there is no longer any need for secret negotiations. Secret negotiations were held when Israel could not dare to meet with the PLO, when it labeled the PLO a terrorist organization that it should not talk to. There were secret meetings when reservations were expressed about the PLO. But there are no secret meetings now. The negotiations will be public, clear, candid, and before the eyes of everybody. Of course the discussions will take their due time, but there is no need for any secret meetings. I reveal to you that some meetings took place between academicians, but they were nothing more than a mental exercise over these issues; they were not recognized by either the Palestinians or the Israelis.

[Caller identified as Abu-Muhammad from Saudi Arabia] This is a question to brother Ahmad Quray': What is the relationship between the Palestinian state and the Jordanian Government? Will there be a confederation or a federation with Jordan? It is known that King Husayn personally rejected a confederation with the Palestinians. Will the future of 400,000 Palestinians in Jordan be taken into consideration?

[Quray'] We defined the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship through resolutions adopted by the successive Palestine National Council sessions, including the latest session [in Gaza]. We said this is a special relationship, and we view it in the future as a confederal relationship between the state of Jordan and the state of Palestine, based on the free will of the two peoples. This is how we view the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. We are extremely eager to preserve this relationship, and we believe that the two peoples and countries complement each other. We are waiting for our independent Palestinian state to emerge so that we can formulate our relationship with Jordan in accordance with the decision of the two peoples.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas Views Hebron Redeployment, Taba Talks

JN0405104896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0415 GMT 4 May 96

[Telephone Interview with Mahmud 'Abbas, PLO Executive Committee member, by Fathi al-Barqawi in the Jericho studios from the "A New Day" program; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], good morning.

['Abbas] Good morning.

[Al-Barqawi] From the Palestinian viewpoint, how would you describe the Israeli prime minister's decision to postpone withdrawal from Hebron?

['Abbas] In fact we have not been officially informed of this decision. We agreed to form a committee to deploy the international observers. This committee will discuss security and civilian issues paving the way for redeployment in Hebron. We have not been officially informed of this issue.

[Al-Barqawi] The Israeli prime minister's office issued a statement to this effect and it was disseminated by Israeli and international media. This is considered at least a semi-official statement. What is the Palestinian reaction?

['Abbas] We regard this as a deviation from what we agreed on because from the beginning we agreed that the Hebron issue is related to procedures and arrangements, that it is not a complex matter of principle. Therefore any change will be regarded as a [word indistinct]

[Al-Barqawi] Does not such reaction encourage the Israelis to indulge in such behavior, given our tremendous experience with their lack of credibility?

['Abbas] We are very patient in negotiations and we must deal with issues with patience and wisdom. We should wait a little to see how events there will shape up. However, we will certainly not offer concessions regarding the implementation of Israel's commitments, because we have carried out our commitments in full.

[Al-Barqawi] Will the final status negotiations in Taba tomorrow be effective or will we have to wait until after the Israeli elections?

['Abbas] The final status negotiations could take as long as three years. Therefore, we should expect delays or interruptions every now and then, but in any case they should not exceed three years. They may be over well before this time because the two sides are supposed to know each other sufficiently well, have been acquainted with the aspirations, rights, and duties of each other. I do not think it will take long before such issues are solved. We are not starting from scratch in our relations.

[Al-Barqawi] Some Israelis and Israeli media say that the Palestinians are reacting tolerantly to the Israeli attitude, and that the Palestinian negotiators and politicians

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are taking the Israeli elections into consideration, at least at the current phase.

['Abbas] We do not want to negotiate with the media or on election campaigns. Therefore, we do not care about things that we hear. We are fully adhering to international resolutions and the world concepts of these resolutions which we approved in the Declaration of Principles. We adhere to their full implementation in form and substance.

[Al-Barqawi] Abu-Mazin, you are the architect of the Oslo agreement and the post-Oslo accords. The Palestinian delegation [to Taba] has been formed under your leadership. Did not this require approval from the Executive Committee?

['Abbas] The Executive Committee approved my assignment to the negotiating process. The delegation does not necessarily require approval by the Executive Committee, because this is a technical issue related to the nature of the negotiations. What is important is that a political decision was made by the Executive Committee asking me to assume this task. Whenever we reach a positive or negative point, we must brief them and ask their opinion.

[Al-Barqawi] Has the Palestinian negotiating team been given a clear strategy?

['Abbas] We are preparing ourselves very well for the final phase talks. The word final means that they are very critical and we are preparing for each point in the negotiations and we hope to perform well.

[Al-Barqawi] Do you have all the dossiers ready with you?

['Abbas] I cannot say that they are all complete but I can say that the picture is clear to us.

[Al-Barqawi] Suppose you are now at the first session of talks and you are asked to speak with the Israeli negotiator, what would you say first.

['Abbas] I think it is better for you to wait a day or two in order to hear everything.

[Al-Barqawi] We will be waiting. There is a belief that the Palestinian negotiator was denied assistance by qualified people in several issues during the negotiations. What about now?

['Abbas] Now we have an army of qualified people to prepare and arrange things because every issue requires an army of experts, drafters, legal advisers, and so on.

[Al-Barqawi] Do you think President 'Arafat's meeting with Clinton and Peres in Washington will help make the negotiations easier?

['Abbas] I believe the world now understands us better. We have seen that the Americans now have a better understanding of us, that they have a clearer picture of us. The respect with which President 'Arafat was received by both the U.S. President and the Administration shows that we, the Palestinian people, enjoy better understanding, given that we have proven beyond any doubt that we are true to our commitments, that we have credibility, that we behave as a state, that 'Arafat acts as a responsible head of state, representing a cause and a people.

[Al-Barqawi] You said a short while ago that the Palestinian and Israeli negotiators know each other very well. Can we say that unofficial talks were held behind the scene before the Taba talks and that agreements on broadlines were reached?

['Abbas] Talks were held. This is shown by the fact that we were successful in convening the Palestine National Council [PNC]. The PNC convocation needed many agreements related to the arrival of members, figures, and so on. Various meetings were held between us and the Israelis away from the media and without announcements. The result was that we reached a decision on the PNC. Now all the PNC members come to the homeland and they have full right to stay here. A large number of observers also received the same rights. Moreover, the Israelis, that is, the Labor Party, announced that they no longer oppose the Palestinian state. All these things were held quietly and during meetings between us. If by your question you mean that agreements were reached on the final status, as some media sources say, I would like to say again that this has not happened.

[Al-Barqawi] It seems that your relations with the media are not so good.

['Abbas] No, my relations with the media are good but I do not like to negotiate with the media.

[Al-Barqawi] Can we say that the final status negotiations will be more serious this time?

['Abbas] The commitment to the date of the talks demonstrates that the two sides are serious in adhering to the issue of the negotiations. This seriousness manifested itself in adherence to the timetable. I hope the same seriousness will be shown in discussing contents. This will be clear during the coming months.

[Al-Barqawi] The hearts of the Palestinian people are with the Palestinian negotiators. Thank you, Abu-Mazin.

['Abbas] May God help us all.

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Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader on Charter, 'Arafat, Coexistence

TA0305194096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 3 May 96

[Interview with Hamas leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin by correspondent Yoram Kohen at the Ayalon prison; date not given—recorded, in Arabic with Hebrew subtitles; translated from the Arabic]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Kohen] You have heard that the Palestine National Council abrogated the articles of the national charter relating to Israel. What is your opinion on this matter?

[Yasin] Of course, this goes without saying. As long as the Palestinian Authority [PA] committed itself to making the change and decided to do so, it was only natural that it would implement the change. There is nothing new in that. As long as I commit myself to amending the charter, I am supposed to do so. That is it.

[Kohen] Do you support the amendment?

[Yasin] At the beginning I opposed the agreement in principle, because it does not meet all the Palestinian people's aspirations, rights, and demands. But since matters have proceeded so far, this is something natural. There is no need for changes or other things. The PA should implement this. There is no change in position or opinion. This is something natural.

[Kohen] Does the charter's amendment turn over a new page in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

[Yasin] Of course, this is a new situation. If in the past, I did not recognize you and sought to destroy you, if now I delete that from the charter and my plans, that means there is coexistence and mutual recognition between us.

[Kohen] But the amendment is not acceptable to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement].

[Yasin] What did you say?

[Kohen] The amendment of the charter is not acceptable to Hamas.

[Yasin] Hamas still does not accept this, but it is obligated to respect the PA's decisions. It should respect and not oppose. True, I am against it, but I must respect this position and not oppose it. This means that just as you have democracy and the right wing says that it is against the agreement, it respects it and does not violate it.

[Kohen] This means that Hamas should respect the PA's decisions.

[Yasin] It should respect them. There is no alternative. Either we respect them or engage in internecine killing — either infighting or respect. We reject infighting; therefore, we should respect them.

[Kohen] You personally, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, do you accept Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] as the Palestinian president?

[Yasin] Of course, why not? Why should he not be president?

[Kohen] Is Abu-'Ammar the Palestinian leader?

[Yasin] Would I accept the head of the Civil Administration to be a Jewish rather than a Palestinian president? Is this logical? If I do not accept Abu-'Ammar as the president of the Palestinian state and people, that would mean I accept Israel in his place.

[Kohen, in Hebrew] In the past four months Yasin has been held in the Prison Authority's medical center. Apparently he has not yet been released for political reasons. The defense establishment tried to use his influence during the kidnapping of Nahshon Wachsman and in the current efforts to find the remains of the soldier Ilan Sa'adon.

[Yasin] This is a humanitarian issue. A mother wishes to see the body of her son and visit his grave. This is a humanitarian need. Therefore, I appeal to the brothers who know his whereabouts or the location of his corpse to provide information about and reveal it, because the mother is in grief about her son and his corpse. This is a humanitarian issue, needing no price or anything in return.

[Kohen] Do you believe that there is a possibility of genuine peace between Israel and the Palestinian people?

[Yasin] There can be peace. Why not? If you give me my rights and let me live in tranquillity, there will be peace. If you oppress me, however, peace will not be established on the basis of oppression.

[Kohen] Does the State of Israel have a place here?

[Yasin] The Palestinian people are supposed to live alongside the State of Israel.

[Kohen] Are you proposing two independent states here in the region?

[Yasin] The Palestinian people should live in a state alongside the State of Israel.

[Kohen] So, you personally, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, recognize the State of Israel?

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[Yasin] If I obtain my full rights and the agreement satisfies me, I would recognize it.

[Kohen] Do you believe there is a possibility of coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Hebron?

[Yasin] There is sensitivity of bloodshed between the two sides. There is history, and there was conflict. Moreover, you are acting in the interest of, for example, 100, 20, or 30 families against hundreds or thousands of people. This is not a sound situation. I believe that if separation had been effected between them at a certain stage, there could have been more calm. When tempers calm down, there can be coexistence.

[Unidentified announcer, in Hebrew] Reacting to Shaykh Yasin's remarks, Shaykh Mahmud al-Zahhar, one of the leaders of Hamas in Gaza, said that as a rule Hamas accepts Shaykh Yasin's political positions. Al-Zahhar nevertheless stressed to our correspondent Yoram Kohen that Hamas is a big movement which encompasses a diverse variety of views. Al-Zahhar noted that Shaykh Yasin was and remains the leader of Hamas, and even described him as the most senior Islamic personality of the entire Palestinian people.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Entire' Hamas Armed Wing Under Arrest Except Dayf

NC0405103496 Paris AFP in English 0957 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, May 4 (AFP) — Palestinian police have arrested the entire membership of the armed wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] except for Muhammad Dayf, the group's chief and Israel's most wanted man, the head of Palestinian security said Saturday [4 May].

"We have detained all the members of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam armed group except for its leader Muhammad Dayf, who we are still hunting for," Colonel Muhammad Dahlan, head of Palestinian preventive security in Gaza, told AFP.

"We want to capture him," he said.

Israeli authorities consider Dayf the mastermind behind the series of suicide bombings in Israel by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and the smaller Islamic Jihad in February and March.

Dayf topped a list of more than a dozen Islamic militants wanted by Israel and submitted to Yasir 'Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA). Most of the others on the list have already been arrested, including Dayf's deputy, 'Adnan al-Ghul.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman—Remarks Attributed to Yasin 'Fabricated'

JN0405115596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement today, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement denied remarks attributed to Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, who is detained in Israel, saying that the remarks were fabricated from A to Z.

Hamas Spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah, who resides in Amman, believes that Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's remarks to Israeli television on coexistence with Israel were fabricated by Israel's Shabak [secret service] organs. These statement were made by the spiritual leader of Hamas under Israeli pressures and temptations which exploited Shaykh Yasin's physical and psychological condition and the illness which has afflicted him since he entered his prison cell seven years ago after receiving a life sentence.

Ghawshah added that the movement cannot examine or discuss these remarks as long as the movement's spiritual leader is in captivity where he is denied his personal freedom and the right of free speech.

Ghawshah reiterated Hamas' commitment to its declared principles and stands adopted when the movement was established in 1987; namely, adhering to the Palestinian territory from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea and adopting the resistance strategy until the land is liberated, stressing the Palestinians' readiness to make sacrifices until the occupation is terminated.

Palestinian Affairs: Secret Hamas Suicide Network Said Uncovered in Gaza

TA0405124496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0700 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security services have uncovered a plan by a secret Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] apparatus for carrying out suicide attacks at 'Arafat's offices, Gaza prison, and the Palestinian Police headquarters in Gaza. This was stated by Muhammad Dahlan, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in Gaza, in an interview to Palestinian television yesterday. Our correspondent Hanan Schlein reports that Dahlan said several of the members of the secret Hamas network have already been arrested.

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Palestinian Affairs: Security Chief Denies Hamas Plan To Kill 'Arafat

JN0605084296 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 6 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that the Palestinian security document that it, together with AL-SABIL, published the week before last found its way to the prime minister's office before it was published by the two weeklies.

A source close to Major General Nasr Yusuf, security chief in the Palestinian Authority, who visited Amman during the 'Id al-Adha holidays, quoted Maj. Gen. Yusuf as saying that the document was authentic and not forged, as circulated by the authority's organs.

The source added that Maj. Gen. Yusuf denied the reports carried by the authorities' organs that a Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] plan to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat had been uncovered. When approached by U.S. and Israeli officials on the purported assassination plan, Maj. Gen. Yusuf denied that such a plan existed.

Palestinian Affairs: Hebron Mayor Urges Peres To Order Immediate Withdrawal

JN0505110596 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 5 May 96 pp 32, 28

[Report by Kamal Zakarinah in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah said that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres does not respect either the agreements he signed or the pledges he promised to honor in front of the world.

In a telephone contact with AL-DUSTUR from Hebron, al-Natshah added: Peres had earlier postponed many deadlines and shirked various commitments. Now, he is procrastinating about withdrawal from Hebron. This is disastrous for the residents of the city. Delaying withdrawal is unjustified. It is a mere attempt to win the votes of the right wing. Despite all the measures he might take, the right wing will not vote for Peres.

Al-Natshah added that Hebron is impatiently awaiting the advent of the Palestinian National Authority to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinians which increased, particularly after the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre [on 25 February 1994]. He noted that after this massacre, Israel took harsh measures against the victims in favor of the settlers.

Al-Natshah explained: Everything is ready for redeployment. Even the Israeli military ruler in Hebron announced that when he receives the order, withdrawal will take place within hours. He said that Peres had failed to honor even the minor obligations he made in Taba, such as lifting the closure on the central market, which had paralyzed the economy and forced merchants to close their shops; and reopening al-Shuhada' Street, which links the eastern and western parts of the city. If reopened, the street would make life easier for the citizens.

The Hebron mayor noted the various Israeli violations of the sanctity of the 1,400-year old holy Ibrahimi Mosque. He added that Israel is trying to divide the mosque between Muslims and Jews by setting up a barricade inside. He asserted that Jews have no historic or religious rights to the mosque. He said that throughout history no mosque in the world has been divided between Muslims and non-Muslims. Likewise, no synagogue has ever been divided between Jews and non-Jews, he noted.

Al-Natshah called on the Israeli prime minister to order the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from Hebron and execute the Palestinian-Israeli agreements so that the city's residents can lead a normal life away from the harassment of settlers and Israeli soldiers. He said that he has no confidence in any promise made by Peres. He wondered how the final-status negotiations can begin while Israel has not yet implemented the interim-period agreements?

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Urayqat, Singer Meet on Final-Status Agenda

JN0305192896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Legislative Council Member Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat met with Yo'el Singer, Israeli Foreign Ministry legal adviser, in Tel Aviv today. The two sides discussed the current preparations to start the final-status talks in Taba on Sunday [6 May].

Following the meeting, Dr. 'Urayqat said that discussions focused on the agenda of these talks, which seek to implement UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Dr. 'Urayqat said a similar meeting will be held tomorrow to agree on the agenda.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Urayqat, Singer To Resume Talks on Final-Status Agenda

JN0405140696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat will meet again with Yo'el Singer, legal adviser to the Israeli Government, this evening to continue drafting the agenda of the final status negotiations which will begin in Taba tomorrow.

Dr. 'Urayqat said following his meeting with Singer yesterday that they discussed the agenda of the negotiations aimed at implementing Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The final status negotiations will deal

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with the issues of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, and relations with neighboring countries.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Urayqat Says Agenda Set for Final-Status Talks

TA0305175196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 3 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian negotiating delegation, met today with Yo'el Singer, Israeli Foreign Ministry legal adviser, to put on the final touches for launching the final stage talks on 5 May. Dr. 'Urayqat told our correspondent Kayid Zahir that the agenda for the talks has been drawn up. The talks will last two days, at the conclusion of which a joint statement will be issued which will announce the beginning of the work of the subcommittees that will be formed to continue these talks.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Palestinian-Israeli Final-Status Talks Open in Taba

NC0505162596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1538 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Taba, 5 May (MENA)—The Palestinian-Israeli final-status talks opened in taba this evening. The Palestinian side is led by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, and the Israeli delegation is led by Israeli Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir.

Today's meeting comes in the context of the two sides' compliance with the 1993 Oslo Accord and the 1995 Taba Accord provision that the final status between the Palestinians and Israelis will be discussed in May 1996.

The meeting also is being held only days before Israeli legislative elections on 29 May.

The current round of talks is expected to be merely a preliminary session and the negotiations are expected to be resumed after the Israeli elections.

Israeli Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir said before the talks began that the Israeli side had come to discuss with the Palestinian side led by Mahmud 'Abbas the ideal way to start this round of talks and also the most effective procedures to follow.

He noted that the Israeli side wants to start negotiations immediately and that the two sides have been engaged in continuous talks for three years now.

Savir refused to term today's session in Taba ceremonial, emphasizing that this meeting is important and that the Israeli side is serious about it. He said the session demonstrates to both the Palestinian and Israeli people our determination to pursue the negotiations until a final agreement is reached.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Dispute Delays Opening of Taba Talks; Delegates Speak

TA0505192896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], head of the Palestinian delegation to the Taba talks with Israel, has said that the Palestinians want a state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Abu-Mazin made the remarks in his speech at the ceremony marking the opening of the negotiations on the permanent settlement.

Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that the opening was held up for three hours because of a dispute over the contents of Abu-Mazin's speech, among other things. In the end, Abu-Mazin changed parts of his speech at the request of Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation.

In his remarks, Abu-Mazin noted the amendments made to the Palestinian Charter and said that since the Palestinians have recognized the State of Israel, the time has come for Israel to lift its opposition to a Palestinian state within recognized borders. He said the national aspirations of the Palestinians are not secret and made it clear that these are a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In his speech, Uri Savir said that Israel, too, has come to the deliberations with basic positions, with security issues being the primary one. He stressed that for Israel there is one eternal issue: Jerusalem, the united capital of Israel. He also said that Israel will make it clear that each of us is responsible for his own fate, the fate of his people, and the fate of those who seek refuge.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Official Source' Cited on Final-Status Negotiations

JN0505192796 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] An official source at the beginning of the final status negotiations between Palestine and Israel said that the Palestinian side officially demanded the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Informed sources said that, from the start, the negotiations have encountered differences over the Palestinian refugees' right to repatriation.

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A number of negotiators pointed out that during a bilateral meeting before the official session, Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation, asked Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the Palestinian delegation, not to mention UN Resolution No. 194, which was issued in 1948 and which recognizes the Palestinian refugees' right to repatriation. 'Abbas rejected this, however. Negotiators say that the two sides are trying to reach a compromise.

Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] said: The negotiations will be difficult and long, but they are a new step on the road to an independent Palestinian state.

The final status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides focus on the issues of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, and borders. The first session of these negotiations will be preceded by a meeting between Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and Yo'el Singer, legal adviser to the Israeli Government, in order to agree on the negotiations agenda.

The negotiations are scheduled to be resumed after the Israeli general elections on 29 May.

'Urayqat criticized Israel's violation of its commitment by postponing partial withdrawal from Hebron, which should have taken place on 28 March. He also called for removing settlements from the Palestinian territories. 'Urayqat said: The settlements should be removed. We do not want the peace process to lead to the establishment of a new Bosnia in the region. Experience has taught us that people should not be mixed together.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Abu-Rudaynah Comments on Final-Status Talks With Israel

NC0505193396 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 May 96

[Interview with Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, in Gaza, by Antoine 'Awn in London—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Awn] Are today's final-status talks a symbolic start of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations? What is the impact of the Hebron situation on this beginning?

[Abu-Rudaynah] Indeed, they do represent the start of the final-status negotiations in accordance with the first Oslo agreement. This agreement set 4 May 1996 for the beginning of talks on issues postponed to the final phase. However, we are practical people and expect the other side to be preoccupied with Israeli elections at the end of this month.

Palestinian committees are getting ready and preparing their files to discuss these issues as soon as possible.

['Awn] While you have offered a great deal to Israel, the Labor Party's program still asserts that the River Jordan is the eastern security border of the Hebrew state. What then is the meaning of this party's decision not to oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state?

[Abu-Rudaynah] As you know, we went to the peace conference in Madrid knowing, along with all the Arabs, that the Palestinian track would be settled in three phases. The phase of Gaza-Jericho first, as you may remember, and then the second phase that was signed in Taba and Washington when agreement was reached on Israel's withdrawal from seven Palestinian cities. Negotiations of the third and final phase will eventually lead to a solution to all outstanding issues, foremost of them Jerusalem, the settlements, refugees, and borders.

['Awn] But do you not see that you have given away everything before entering this phase?

[Abu-Rudaynah] We actually liberated Gaza, Jericho, six Palestinian cities, and seven provinces, and are now awaiting the liberation of Hebron. We began with the peace conference in 1990 and went to the peace conference on the basis of [Resolution] 242 and the exchange of land for peace. We have liberated territory and taken over Gaza and Jericho. Perhaps you remember that we were charged that Gaza and Jericho would be the first and last. So you see, today six Palestinian cities are liberated. We expect the Israeli army to pull out of Hebron as soon as possible. The talks due to open today will leave the door wide open for liberating the remaining land.

As I told you, we went to the Madrid conference on the basis of former U.S. President George Bush's initiative on the principle of land for peace and Security Council Resolution 242, which stipulates Israel's withdrawal from all occupied territories.

['Awn] One final question please. The Israeli Labor Party wants a dismembered Palestinian state in which there are settlements and that does not include Jerusalem. How can the Palestinians change these conditions in the next three years?

[Abu-Rudaynah] As I said, we will accept nothing less than an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem, holy Jerusalem, as its capital—a whole and undivided state. Therefore, settlements are on the agenda; so is Jerusalem and the borders. The Palestinian demand is clear: an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem its capital. We will accept no other solution, because a fair and comprehensive solution must take Palestinian rights into consideration. We went to the Madrid peace conference on this basis and we are continuing the negotiations on this basis.

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Arab-Israeli Talks: Proceedings of Palestinian-Israeli Opening Meeting Detailed

NC0505195796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1930 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Taba, 5 May (MENA)—Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the Palestinian delegation to the final status negotiations that opened in Taba this evening, has said that today's meeting falls within the framework of implementing UN Resolution 242 and the resolutions of the Madrid conference.

Abu-Mazin thanked President Mubarak and Egypt for hosting the talks. He said in a speech at the plenary session this evening: We are looking forward to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with the eastern part of Jerusalem as its capital.

He added: We came here to achieve peace and confront its enemies together.

'Abbas remarked that there are many issues and problems that can be resolved by demonstrating a true desire to achieve peace, pointing out that peace is in the interest of both sides.

He pointed out that the PLO has honored all its commitments, referring to the recent meeting in Gaza of the Palestine National Council at which the Palestinian National Charter was amended. He added that there are many issues on the agenda of the talks, such as Jerusalem, international relations, security, the refugees, the settlements, and water supplies. He called for a just solution to the refugee issue and for ending the policies of closing the territories and expanding the settlements.

For his part, Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation, praised Egypt for hosting the talks, affirming that the Israeli side has come with peace as its target. He stressed that the two sides should work together to achieve peace and confront terrorism.

He added: The two sides agreed in Oslo to resolve their 100-year-old differences. Peace, particularly safe borders, will continue to be our major concern, he stressed. He asserted that the issue of Jerusalem was already settled, stressing that it will continue to be the united capital of Israel.

The plenary session was attended by representatives from the Egyptian Foreign Ministry; the ambassadors of the United States, Japan, and Norway; the European Union representative in Cairo; and the head of the Middle East Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Abbas, Savir Comment on Taba's First Round

NC0605071096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The final status Palestinian-Israeli negotiations resumed today in Taba. The two sides concluded the first session of negotiations yesterday evening. This session was chaired on the Palestinian side by Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, member of the PLO Executive Committee, and on the Israeli side by Uri Savir, secretary general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

Mahmud 'Abbas stated, after the first session, that the two sides discussed issues within the framework of the final stage talks and ways of dealing with them. He said that we have three years ahead of us to find solutions to these matters. He expressed his hope that these solutions will be finalized before the three years are up. Mahmud 'Abbas pointed out that the two sides discussed during yesterday's meeting a number of matters pending from the transitional stage, such as the issue of withdrawal from Hebron, releasing the detainees, and the crossings linking the West Bank to the Gaza Strip. He noted that during the coming round of negotiations these pending matters will be discussed along with the final solution issues. He reaffirmed that the Palestinian side does not want to stop negotiations until after Israeli elections start. However, we believe that negotiations will speed up after the Israeli elections.

For his part, Uri Savir stated that the gap between the two sides over the Jerusalem issue is large and fundamental. However, we have three years ahead of us during which we can find a solution.

On another level, Foreign Ministry Secretary General Ambassador 'Adil al-Safti stated that Egypt's invitation to the two delegations to meet on its territory to start the final stage negotiations is in line with its policies and permanent role in seeking a just and comprehensive solution in the Middle East. He added, in a speech he delivered yesterday during a reception in honor of the Palestinian and Israeli delegation members, that all the people in the region should be allowed to enjoy this peace. He noted that this peace should be based on equal rights, security, and prosperity, without any exceptions. He said that world attention is moving toward these talks and that the world is very hopeful this meeting will mark the beginning of a new historic era which will lead to a peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict [illegible] realizing the ambitions and aspirations of the Palestini[illegible] and Israeli people.

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Arab-Israeli Talks: Negotiator Denies Israeli Pressure on Resolution 194

JN0605094596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, head of the Palestinian delegation, and Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation, are now meeting in the Egyptian resort of Taba to discuss reports that Israel is bringing pressure to bear on the Palestinian side to avoid any reference to Resolution 194 on refugees.

Hasan 'Asfur, member of the Palestinian delegation to these negotiations, denied such pressure, affirming that nonmention of this resolution stems from the many international resolutions on the issue of refugees. 'Asfur stressed that the negotiations will deal with the refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, and all other issues associated with a final settlement.

The session of negotiations is expected to end today and will resume following the Israeli elections scheduled for 29 May.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Savir Comments on Paper Drafted With Abu-Mazin in Taba

TA0605100096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0905 GMT 6 May 96

[Report by Gay Qotev in Taba]

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief delegates Uri Savir and Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] have just finished drafting a document, and it is now being typed. Its completion concludes this token opening of the permanent status talks.

The format of talks that the sides have agreed upon is very reminiscent of Oslo B. Uri Savir told us: Small teams will work at first, and later committees will address problems and wide-scale negotiations will be conducted.

[Begin Savir recording] We decided to set up a steering mechanism for the permanent status negotiations, in which each side will be represented by four or five people. It will address the conceptual aspects, the fundamental principles. At a later date — which has not yet been determined — work teams will be set up. The work will be done on the basis of everything agreed on in the DOP [Declaration of Principles] and in accordance with the DOP agenda. The DOP will also be our reference as to what new issues can be raised.

In addition, we stressed the importance of continued antiterror activity, the need to promote ties between the nations through various projects that will be launched, and the solid foundation created by the interim agreement and the ties between the two sides. [end recording]

We asked when the second round discussions will begin. Uri Savir replied: If the question is whether it will happen before or after the elections, I can assure you of one thing: It will not happen on election day. Both sides believe, however, that the permanent status talks will only start after the Israeli elections.

After the Palestinians were pressured by the Israelis to make some changes in Abu-Mazin's opening statement yesterday, they came to today's session in a charged mood. We are disappointed in the Israeli stands, head of the Palestinian Authority's negotiating department, Hanan 'Asfur, told us, denying that Abu-Mazin's speech had been amended. Yet despite the morning's disagreements, a paper was eventually drafted by the two chief delegates, who were occasionally joined by other delegates. Most of the delegates waited in the lobby with the reporters, however. The document will soon be presented to the two delegations.

The token opening ceremony has in fact ended. The sides are now looking to a long period during which they will have to address the toughest problems: Jerusalem's status, the settlements' future, the status of refugees, and the right of return.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Crisis at Talks; Palestinian Members Walk Out, Return

NC0605104496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Taba, 6 May (MENA)—The second session of the Palestinian-Israeli final-status negotiations today entered a crisis. The Palestinian delegation protested because the Israeli delegation leaked information yesterday in which it said that the Israeli side pressured the Palestinian delegation not to mention UN Resolution 194 on the return of the Palestinian refugees in the speech by Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, to the opening session of the negotiations. The speech also lacked any reference to removing the Israeli settlements.

The Palestinian delegation stated their rejection of this Israeli method based on deception and cheating. They said the Palestinian side rejects any pressure from the Israelis.

Several members of the Palestinian delegation, including Hasan 'Asfur, the official responsible for the negotiations, and Muhammad Dahlan, the official responsible for security, left the hall.

Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, the head of the Palestinian delegation, met Uri Savir, the head of the Israeli

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delegation. 'Abbas said Israel must deny these publicized reports citing Israeli delegation pressure on the Palestinian delegation. He also demanded guarantees that rumors should not be leaked. Such a situation harms the atmosphere of the negotiations.

After about an hour the members of the Palestinian delegation returned to the negotiating table and the talks are now continuing.

Hasan 'Asfur stressed that he rejects what he termed cheating and deception by the Israeli delegation, a method used during Israeli election campaigns. He said such methods should not be used.

'Asfur highlighted the rights of Palestinians forced to leave their country in 1948 to return to their land, clarifying that the Palestinian side is also demanding an independent Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem and the evacuation of the Israeli settlements, not their removal, so that the Palestinians can use the buildings.

This round of negotiations is expected to conclude today.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Tunisian Official Affirms Commitment to Accord With Israel

TA0305174996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 3 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunisian Deputy Foreign Minister Sa'id Ben Mustafa has affirmed his country's commitment to the agreement signed between Israel and Tunisia about the exchange of diplomatic representations on the level of interest offices. Sa'id Mu'addi, Qol Yisra'el Arabic correspondent for political affairs who is accompanying Minister Yosi Beilin on his current visit to Tunisia, reports that at their meeting this afternoon, the Tunisian deputy foreign minister stressed to Mr. Beilin that the postponement of the opening of the Tunisian diplomatic representation in Tel Aviv stems from administrative reasons only, which have no connection with Tunisia's political stance.

It is worth noting that Minister Yosi Beilin is participating in the meetings of the Middle East committee of Socialist International which are being held in the Tunisian capital.

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Algeria

Algeria: Former Interior Minister Assassinated in Algiers

LD0405171896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received this report: Mr. Mohamed Hardi, former interior minister, was assassinated at 1530 [1430 GMT] today in the car park of a ceramics factory in the municipality of Oued Smar, in Algiers. A statement released by the security forces said that the victim was attacked by three armed criminals.

Algeria: President, Prime Minister Condemn Murder of Ex-Minister

LD0405212796 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mr. Mohamed Hardi, a former minister of interior and local authorities, was today the victim of a fatal criminal attack carried out by three armed criminals. [passage omitted]

Following the dastardly assassination of Mohamed Hardi, President Liamine Zeroual sent a message of condolence and sympathy to the family of the deceased. Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia received with deep sorrow, grief, and indignation the news of the dastardly assassination of Hardi which was carried out today by a terrorist group in Oued Smar. The prime minister said: The martyr Mohamed Hardi, who served his homeland with dedication and loyalty, was the victim of brutal terrorism which attacks the entire Algerian nation indiscriminately.

On behalf of the government and in his own name, the prime minister strongly condemned this unforgivable dastardly attack, saying that its perpetrators would most certainly be punished.

The prime minister also sent a message of condolence and sympathy to the family of the deceased.

Mohamed Hardi was minister of the interior and local authorities in Belaid Abdesselam's government from July 1992 to September 1993. Hardi, born in 1943, was a senior manager at the National Steel and Iron Company from 1967 to 1976, and was then appointed secretary-general of the Ministry of Information and Culture from 1977 to 1981. He had also been working as a consultant for several UN organizations since 1988. Hardi was married and had four children.

Algeria: Bomb in Tizi Ouzou Kills 2, Injures Around 15

LD0505152696 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two people were killed and around 15 others injured when a home-made bomb went off in Tizi Ouzou, Kabylie, yesterday afternoon. The device was planted near a bus stop close to a school. It went off before the pupils came out of school.

Algeria: Regional Court Passes Death Sentence for Terrorist Crimes

LD0405231196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Criminal Court in Medea today sentenced three criminals to death in absentia. According to the public relations office of Medea's judicial council, the three defendants were charged with criminal offenses such as setting up an armed terrorist group and committing a premeditated murder.

The court also found two other people guilty of premeditated murder and aggravated theft and sentenced them to life imprisonment.

Algeria: Zeroual Makes Statement at 5 May News Conference

LD0505164296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 5 May 96

[Statement by Algerian President Liamine Zeroual at a news conference in Algiers on 5 May — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of the national press: I am very pleased to meet today with the national press for at least three reasons.

The first reason is the duty to greet and express the appreciation to our Algerian press which it deserves from every citizen. This press which, despite its young diversity and despite the national economic difficulties, especially the violent and barbarous aggression which has particularly targeted it, is still standing, steadfast and growing.

The second reason is to display the importance the state attaches, as I have always stressed, to the true pluralistic Algerian national press. We have a press in which pluralism constitutes the necessary facility for firm democracy, and whose commitment to Algeria's higher interests makes the contribution the nation expects from its mass media.

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The third reason for my satisfaction in meeting you is that the press is characterized by transparency and truth, and, as I have always defended with conviction, this is the essential link between those who undertake the duty of administering our country's affairs and the Algerian people for whom we are responsible.

Thus, I see that it is my duty within this framework to address the nation and inform it of how the administration of the country is faring, and in particular the situation of the national dialogue we resumed in April.

Ladies and Gentlemen, if dialogue were among the eternal civilized virtues, we would all admit that the national dialogue occupies a fundamental position in our effort to get out of the crisis. It is an effort our country started making four years ago.

Even if this national dialogue did not achieve all its set objectives during its previous phases, nobody can deny the contribution it has made to the important steps made by Algeria down the path of reform. It is my duty today to recall this contribution briefly.

The national conference we held in January 1994 had the merit of concentrating national awareness and mobilization on the seriousness of the crisis that had hit Algeria. The conference also helped pave the way toward ending this crisis and providing the country with institutions to run the interim period provisionally.

In this context, the dialogue which I personally worked hard to promote, free from any calculations or ulterior motives, during the last two years has managed to widen national solidarity, strengthen our country's strong principles, and bring matters under control. It also enabled the Algerian people to re-evaluate the democratic choice freely, as they demonstrated on 16 November last year.

Of course, the national dialogue has been strengthened by the significant progress it has made, and commitment to it has been reinforced. This commitment stems from the duty to satisfy the demands of the Algerian people, as well as from the strong conviction that a serious dialogue carried out within a framework reflecting our principles and values is the best way to help Algerians overcome their misunderstandings and differences. Only then will citizens come together in wider and stronger gatherings [political parties and associations] to face up to any attempts to undermine our country internally or externally.

This willingness to continue the national dialogue before and after my election to the presidency of the republic led me to promise the completion of the electoral process and the reinforcement of the foundations of pluralist democracy in our country.

This is the meaning and goal of the consultations I had during April with national figures, political parties, and representatives of civil society. I am taking this opportunity to explain this to the public.

Ladies and Gentlemen, because the national dialogue I started has benefited from the previous dialogue, it was obvious to expect that it would reach clear goals, such as: the strengthening of the foundations of pluralist democracy; the holding of the next elections; ensuring the necessary conditions for peace in order to allow the people to express their free and sovereign choice. These are the prospects I examined with all the brothers and sisters I received during the last weeks.

There is a national consensus that any attempt to question pluralist democracy in Algeria should be isolated. Therefore, I understand that this compels us to reinforce the foundations of this democracy and set up rules for it in order to allow the Algerian people, who are the source of this democracy, to avoid falling once again into the trap of turmoil, division, and even tragedy while exercising their right of choosing their leaders.

Pluralist democracy requires the setting up of an institutional structure which must reflect the rules of democratic practice. Everybody knows that the 1989 Constitution did not guarantee all these requirements; on the contrary, it was one of the sources of the slide toward anarchy.

These, therefore, are the reasons that led me to suggest the idea of amending the Constitution.

The objective of amending the Constitution is to protect our national unity and identity from the practice of politicking, remove violence from the democratic process, and open up our national institutions to truly reflect pluralism and the transfer of power within a framework of stability that is necessary to pursue our development efforts.

As agreed at the national conference in January 1994, the laws on political parties and elections must be reviewed before completing the electoral process. This leads me to tackle the second topic which was the subject of the national dialogue, namely the agenda of the local and general elections.

On this basis, I suggested to the participants in the dialogue that a referendum on amending the Constitution be held before the end of the year, and that general elections be held by the end of the first half of next year. This would be followed by local elections. This sequence of events, which seems logical to me, would

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offer appropriate conditions for the organization of various elections, whose different requirements would benefit future ones. The most significant factors are social cohesion and security. This has led me to propose the holding of a national conference before getting down to the matter of the electoral agenda.

My proposal of holding a national conference before the end of this summer, if every side does what they should do, emanates from an analysis of the situation at a national level. This analysis reflects our people's feelings and our country's reality.

Indeed, our people, who had to intervene as a direct judge in the crisis, issued last 16 November some essential judgments. The Algerian people defeated those who had doubts about their unity and their sticking to their principles and deeply rooted values. Our people also expressed their firm condemnation of terrorism and their patience in the face of false debates and fabricated divisions shown by some factions of the political sphere.

My efforts to hold a national conference come in compliance with our people's expectations. The first goal of this conference is to gather all representatives of the country around a number of principles and constants which have become a clear and strong framework for dialogue and the practice of pluralist democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are the issues I proposed to think and exchange views about to all personalities, political parties and organizations I received. All these elements will be published in a memorandum, in the coming days.

This memorandum will be given to the participants in this dialogue, so that they are given the opportunity to put forward their written views before the starting of a second phase of meetings.

You have already been briefed by those who accepted to express their views on the meetings. As far as I am concerned, I think that these preliminary contacts were marked by calmness and realism. This leads to the hope that the political parties will participate in a constructive way in the preparation of the next elections during which the Algerian people will have their final say in total sovereignty.

These are the dimensions of the current consultations which I wanted the Algerian people to know. Regarding this subject, I am ready to reply to your questions.

I am also ready to answer your questions at this occasion, questions about other issues which are of interest to you and to the Algerian nation. Thank you for your attention, and now over to you with your questions, and thank you once again.

Algeria: Zeroual Announces Referendum, Election, Conference Dates

LD0505114296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1100 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the republic has announced three key decisions: the holding of a referendum on amending the Constitution before the end of 1996; the organization of general elections before the end of the first half of 1997; and the holding of a national conference early this summer.

All these decisions will be included in a memo that will submitted to the participants in the national dialogue within the next few days.

Algeria: RCD Leader Interviewed on Political Issues

LD0405212896

[FBIS Report] Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic at 1200 GMT on 4 May carries a 34-minute recorded interview with Said Saadi, secretary general of the Rally for Culture and Democracy, RCD.

Saadi says that the last national dialogue between President Liamine Zeroual and national figures, leaders of political parties and organizations was not really a dialogue as such, but an exchange of views.

Saadi insists that the dialogue should be comprehensive, pointing out that the previous dialogues had failed. He underlines that the reasons for these failures should be examined, and that the last presidential elections proved that the Algerians have exercised their rights, expecting a lot from their leaders in return.

The RCD's secretary general stresses that the "mobilization of the Algerians before the elections has now faded away", and that five months after the elections, nothing has happened. He says that he did not himself understand anything of the presidency's intentions or political, economic, and cultural programs.

Saadi indicates that society was expecting more in all fields, pointing out that Zeroual had gained the confidence of Algerians, but people were still waiting for decisive actions.

He then talked about the necessity to consolidate democracy for the sake of a return to peace, because, he said, "as long the crisis goes on, the opposition will be paralyzed, and the government will not do anything." "Therefore we need to have a consensus on the solution" to the crisis.

The RCD secretary general then talks about the latest political developments to explain his view of the crisis.

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Replying to a question on the amendment of the constitution to pave the way for a solution to the crisis, he says: "The executive leadership has not assumed its responsibilities," pointing out: "Laws do exist and we need to implement them, that's all."

On the government's idea to create a senate, Saadi says that he fears that the goal behind it is to deprive the parliament from defense and foreign affairs policies. He notes that the idea could be good only through a debate on the prerogatives of this senate.

On the amendment of the constitution, Saadi says that this could be done after the legislative and local elections, "if the current laws were rightly implemented."

On the date of the local and parliamentary elections, the RCD's secretary general states: "We all said that these elections should be held after the presidential elections to achieve institutional stability."

He adds: "When I hear the government saying that the security situation has improved, as far as I am concerned, except from this issue of violence, there is nothing else preventing the holding of these elections." For Saadi, the elections should be held as soon as possible, because, as he says: "A state which has no municipalities or parliament is not a state."

He believes that these elections could be held using the existing laws. Regarding the amendment of the elections law, he indicates that according to his information, all parties concerned were interested in the proportional system.

The interview then dealt with the necessity of freedom of speech and press for the consolidation of democracy and the conditions of success of the national conference due in the summer.

He says that the conference should tackle the real problems of the country, pointing out that the only way of achieving this success is to have a genuine dialogue with the opposition.

Concerning violence, he believes that the only way of totally defeating it is a closer cooperation between the authorities and the people.

Saadi concludes the interview by discussing the economic situation in Algeria.

Egypt

Egypt: EU's Agnelli, Musa Discuss EU-Egyptian Partnership

NC0405205096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A round of talks was held this evening at the Foreign Ministry between Egypt and the European Union [EU] troika delegation. The Egyptian side was chaired by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. The troika delegation was chaired by Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli in her capacity as president of the EU.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated during the joint news conference which was held at the end of the talks that the talks had addressed the peace process, the crucial situation in the Middle East, and the future of the peace process in general, in addition to discussing the Barcelona process and European-Mediterranean relations between the countries on the southern and eastern rims of the Mediterranean and the 15 EU countries.

The talks also addressed the issue of Egyptian-European partnership.

On her part, the Italian minister said the EU troika delegation—which in addition to her includes the deputy foreign ministers of Ireland and Spain—has come to the region to express the EU countries' concern over what has happened to the peace process and recent events. She added that the delegation visited the region after the Qana massacre in Lebanon. We conveyed to the Israeli side our viewpoints on this massacre. She said: The cease-fire that has been agreed upon there will not become a real peace until agreements are made that insure a just and permanent peace for all countries in the region.

Answering a question on the difficulties before signing the Egyptian-European partnership agreement, (Juan Prav), the director general of the Mediterranean, Asia, and Latin America regions in the EU committee and member of the delegation, said that the EU is holding a series of negotiations with a number of Mediterranean countries. Agreement has already been reached with Tunisia, Morocco, and Israel. Negotiations are currently taking place with some other countries in the region. He added that all these agreements have as their objective the setting up of a network that establishes an economic region that includes all the countries of the Mediterranean.

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Egypt: EU's Agnelli Comments After Meeting Mubarak

NC0505110396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0830 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 5 May (MENA)—Susanna Agnelli, Italian foreign minister and head of the European troika delegation, described the delegation's talks with President Husni Mubarak today as important.

Speaking after a meeting with President Mubarak today, Agnelli noted that the president explained to the delegation the recent events in the Middle East and what the EU can do to put the regional peace process back on its normal track. President Mubarak told the delegation that he has a feeling of injustice about what has happened in the region, she added. President Mubarak noted that the U.S. role tended to be extremely biased toward Israel when Israel came under attacks, while the United States failed to adopt a just position regarding what happened to people in southern Lebanon, she added.

Agnelli noted that, during its meeting next week, she would inform the EU of the results of the European troika delegation's talks in Cairo, adding that the EU will do what it can to put the peace process back on its normal track to achieve a lasting peace in the region.

Asked about her view of the peace process at present, particularly after the recent developments in the self-rule areas and the aggression on Lebanon, Agnelli said that what happened between the Palestinians and Israelis was positive. She noted that the Palestine National Council meeting was an important step. Commenting on Lebanon, Agnelli expressed the hope that Security Council Resolution 425 calling for Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon would be fully implemented. Stressing the need to secure this withdrawal, Agnelli added: We also think that failure to do so will not lead to a real or lasting peace in the region, and we will do what we can to achieve this as soon as possible.

Asked if Europe could play a stronger role in the peace process, particularly in light of France's role in resolving the recent crisis in Lebanon, the Italian foreign minister said that the EU backed the French stance, which was a good step, adding that the French and U.S. initiatives worked side by side. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Musa Warns Against Regional Imbalance, 'Bias'

NC0505111696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0950 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that during his talks with the EU delegation today President Husni Mubarak discussed the question of the enormous military backing that Israel receives, which creates a serious and unbalanced situation and calls into question the credibility of the peace process.

In remarks he made today, Musa added that what interests us is to see an effective European role in the Middle East peace process.

Regarding the postponement of the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron and a possible European role to pressure Israel to withdraw, Musa said: We have asked the EU to play a more active role to establish a balance in the peace process and create an appropriate atmosphere to achieve a just and lasting peace. He noted that Egypt supports a more effective European role to establish peace. He noted that the U.S. role is extremely important but that there is a lack of balance in general in the Arab-Israeli equation and in the arrangements for the region's future status. He added that any tipping of the balance or bias toward a particular party will affect stability in the region.

Asked if he thinks the European role in the past months has been less effective than it should have been, Musa said: Yes, certainly.

Asked about an Israeli plan to confiscate more Palestinian land in Jerusalem, Musa said: I prefer to view these things as part of the election process in Israel — but if they go beyond this, then it is a serious matter.

The foreign minister noted that he will attend the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Mediterranean Forum countries in Italy on Thursday [9 May]. During that meeting, the conferees will discuss cooperation among the 11-member states, the situation in the Mediterranean, and the forum's position regarding the agreement reached during the recent meeting in Barcelona concerning cooperation among the Mediterranean countries.

Egypt: Musa Returns, Plays Down Turkish-Israeli Military Accord

NC0305131896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1230 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said he will present a detailed report to President Husni Mubarak on his talks with Turkish officials during his visit to Turkey, which ended today.

In a statement upon his return to Cairo from Ankara this afternoon Musa said he will convey to President Mubarak greetings from Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and the Turkish Government.

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He said he will also report to the Council of Ministers on his visit to Turkey. Musa explained that the assertions and explanations offered by the Turkish Government concerning the security agreement between Turkey and Israel showed the agreement was presented in a largely distorted and exaggerated manner. This was stressed by the Turkish president, the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the defense minister, he said.

Musa paid a two-day visit to Ankara during which he conveyed a message from President Mubarak to President Demirel. He also held intensive talks with the Turkish prime minister and the foreign and defense ministers.

Egypt: Joint Egyptian-Turkish Press Statement Issued

NC0305145696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1345 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 May (MENA)—Egypt and Turkey stressed that the establishment of alliances or blocs in the Middle East harms peace and stability in the region. They stressed that bilateral arrangements between countries in the region should not be directed against other countries.

This came in a joint Egyptian-Turkish press statement issued after Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's two day visit to Ankara, which ended today, at the invitation of Turkish Foreign Minister Emre Gonensay.

The statement said that 'Amr Musa's visit to Ankara was made within the framework of the mechanism of consultations between Egypt and Turkey, two countries bound by old ties of friendship.

The press statement said that Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and his Turkish counterpart Emre Gonensay discussed current developments in the Middle East peace process and underlined their commitment to the comprehensive, lasting, and just peace in the region in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate national hopes.

The two ministers stressed that the comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires regional arms limitation measures that provide more security and equitable security with a minimum level of armaments and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the region. They called on the regional parties to exert efforts toward this end.

The two sides stressed that stability and security in the region require full respect for the principle of resolving conflicts through peaceful means, noninterference in internal affairs, the countries' regional safety, and noninfringement of their borders.

'Amr Musa and Emre Gonensay expressed their appreciation for the cease-fire agreement in Lebanon and praised all the international efforts that helped attain this agreement. The two ministers expressed their hope that the success of the peace process will create a new climate of coexistence and economic cooperation in the region.

Musa and Gonensay underlined their strong condemnation of all acts of terrorism, regardless of their motives and their perpetrators. They also stressed that the selective treatment of terrorism is unacceptable and that any foreign support for terrorist actions should be stopped. The two ministers appealed to countries that support terrorism to abandon this policy.

Foreign Ministers Musa and Gonensay stressed the importance of encouraging the private sectors in Egypt and Turkey to set up projects in the two countries and with third countries in order to develop economic and trade ties.

The two ministers also stressed the importance of activating the two countries' talks on encouraging and protecting investments and to conclude agreements in this field in order to complete the legal framework for bilateral economic ties.

The two ministers recorded their appreciation for the excellent bilateral relations and underlined their determination to develop them in all fields.

'Amr Musa expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome accorded him and his delegation during this visit.

Egypt: Musa on Turkish-Israeli Accord

NC0405190996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1445 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that Egypt will closely watch the Turkish-Israeli agreement in view of the current serious developments in the Middle East.

In a statement at noon today, Musa said Egypt's position on the issue is this: The region now needs peace agreements, not military and strategic agreements, certainly not ones concluded in the absence of the [other] states of the region.

He said the Turkish president and officials stressed to him during his visit to Ankara that the Turkish-Israeli agreement is not a military or a strategic one, that it is not meant to create military alliances or axes, and that it is only meant for training purposes.

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He said he conveyed these explanations to the Council of Ministers, and the issue will be followed.

The foreign minister denied reports published in Turkish papers today that Egypt had asked for an Egyptian-Turkish military agreement similar to the Turkish-Israeli agreement.

He stressed that Egypt is working to solidify peace in the region, not to establish alliances or blocs with unknown objectives, ones that may lead to a great deal of tension and instability.

Musa presented a comprehensive report to President Husni Mubarak on the results of his visit to Turkey for the past two days.

Egypt: Musa Cited on Iranian, Israeli Nuclear Arms

NC0405085696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0715 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ankara, 4 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said he was satisfied when Turkish President Suleman Demirel told him the military agreement between Turkey and Israel was not different from accords that Turkey has signed with 15 other countries, and that the agreement will be submitted to the parliament for ratification.

Musa made statements to the chief editors of Turkish newspapers that were published today. He said that although Egypt opposes Iran in exporting the Iranian revolution abroad, Iran's possession of nuclear weapons while Israel has the same weapons makes us wonder about the reason for forbidding Iran from obtaining these weapons and allowing Israel to have them.

Musa added that the United States informed Egypt that the reconnaissance flights by U.S. military aircraft over southern Iraq will be temporary.

The foreign minister reiterated Egypt's rejection of partitioning Iraq into three statelets and noted that the Turkish president asserted to him that Turkey takes the same position.

Egypt: Musa—Region Needs Peace Agreements, Not Military Accords

JN0305182996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1530 GMT 3 May 96

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Ahmad Suwaydan; place and date not given; from "The Week's Event" program— recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Musa] The region needs peace agreements, not military accords. The region is in need of what reinforces a balanced peace, which is accepted by the two parties and does not privilege one party over the other. Anything that conflicts with this is not in harmony with an environment of peace.

[Suwaydan] Your Excellency, Egypt expressed, through you, the need to choose between military alliances, which will pave the road for future wars, on one the hand and peace on the other. What role can Egypt play in setting up a regional security balance that will put an end to military alliances?

[Musa] If we return to military alliances this will be a serious setback for the environment of peace and for the future of the region because there are too many different dimensions of alliances. There can be no alliances without opposite alliances, or agreements without opposite agreements, neither now nor in the future. Opening this door means creating a deep ditch in the road to peace which would cancel all hopes of peace, stability, cooperation, and development.

[Suwaydan] Do the agreements which fall under the U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance raise questions about the credibility of Washington as a partner in and sponsor of a settlement of the Arab- Israeli conflict?

[Musa] This should not prompt us to attack certain sides. The matter requires diplomatic contacts and serious discussions regarding the future of the region and the effects of favoring a certain country over other countries with the aim of paving the road for hegemony and the use of military power to impose conditions. These matters are very serious and require diplomatic and political efforts. I do not believe we will benefit by describing it more than this.

[Suwaydan] How can we put an end to favoring one country over other countries in the region?

[Musa] This requires all countries to be aware of the seriousness of this era. There is a return now to what was repeated in the past, things which led to confusion in the past. In fact, much consultation and study is required, but this should be based on rejecting favoritism.

Egypt: Musa Backs Palestinian Position on Hebron Redeployment

NC0405181996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1756 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated today that Egypt supports the Palestinian position objecting to Israel's plan to postpone the redeployment of its forces from Hebron.

Musa explained that the postponement is not good for the credibility that should prevail in implementing

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the existing agreements. He said he hopes that the postponement will be for only a few days, noting that this can be tolerated.

Musa remarked that the fact that the Israeli Labor Party has removed the clause opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state from its platform is an important indication even though Israeli statements to the contrary are made now and then. He asserted that Egypt regards this as a positive step and would like all Israeli statements to be in agreement with it.

Commenting on Israel's pronouncements on Jerusalem, 'Amr Musa said that this is an issue for negotiation and the Arab, Islamic, and international positions on this matter are well known. He asserted that any statements to the contrary are for electoral purposes only.

Regarding the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations that will begin in Taba tomorrow, Musa said that this is a positive step on the right path. He said that ending opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state is a positive step, and beginning the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron would be another positive step.

Egypt: Egyptian Held on Spy Charges for Iraq, Russia

NC0405193596 Paris AFP in English 1850 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, May 4 (AFP) — An Egyptian has been held for eight months in prison, accused of spying for Iraq and Russia for three years, legal officials revealed for the first time Saturday [4 May].

The man, who was not identified, was arrested in 1995. He was said by one official to have been a former civil servant from the southern town of al-Minya who "left for Baghdad in 1992 to work on a huge project carried out by the Russians."

He was first recruited by the Iraqi intelligence services and then by Russian agents working on the project. He has reportedly acknowledged to prosecutors that both countries had asked for "information on the strategic and military sites in Egypt."

After several return visits to Egypt, he was arrested in September when he arrived in the Egyptian port of Nuwaybi' from a trip to Baghdad. Prosecutors have detained him for a further 45 days pending his trial which is due to open soon, legal officials added.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Egypt expelled dozens of Russian diplomats after accusing them of spying, as well as several Iraqi secret service agents.

Libya

Libya: Christopher's Remarks Called 'Political Arrogance'

LD0305145996 Tripoli JANA in English 1426 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London Al-Maa [May] 3 JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — News reports indicated that the American Secretary of State said he lost his patience after spending more than 20 hours with President Hafiz al-Asad [on a] shuttle mission between Syria and occupied Palestine at the time of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

The satellite network MBC said that the American Secretary of State confirmed that he told the Syrian president himself that he lost his patience.

The news editor in JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY commented on the nonsensical statement by the American official by saying We object to the brash manner in which the American Secretary of State spoke to President al-Asad. We can do nothing other than to curse the current Arab situation which has reached the point that makes the enemies of this nation tower over one of its national heroes, President Hafiz al-Asad. We object to this despite President Hafiz al-Asad [having] accepted as a head of state to be on the same negotiating table as head of the Syrian side in talks with the American side which was led by a mere secretary of state.

Despite the long time which President al-Asad spent with the secretary of state during several meetings, this particular American official comes out with such a statement saying that he lost his patience in these meetings.

The Arab affairs editor in JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY asked Who is the one who should lose his patience — is it the American official who never gets tired or bored from shuttle missions throughout the region, spending long days and nights mostly in occupied Palestine, dedicated to giving the Israelis the opportunity to conduct aggression against the Arab and Lebanese people, slaughter them and destroy their villages for the sole purpose of reaching a settlement that serves the Israelis — or is it President Hafiz al-Asad who should lose patience with this American official who was exasperated at having to spend 20 hours with President al-Asad in a private meeting to find a plan to the so-called ceasefire in Lebanon.

The American official considered that the time was long and wasted and would inflict damage on American and Israeli interests and jeopardise relations between America and Syria.

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The Arab affairs editor in JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY said it is nothing but the insulting situation of the Arab nation that gives this secretary of state the chance to disregard common political courtesies and relationship between the two states, allows, as well as his role which will never put him on the same level with a head of state, to give such a statement which expresses unprecedented political arrogance.

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Meets With North Korean Foreign Minister

LD0405210896 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The brother leader of the revolution [Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] today received North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong-Nam who conveyed to him a verbal message from President [as heard] Kim Chong-il, in which he expressed the solidarity and support of the government and people of North Korea to the Great Jamahiriyah in facing up to the unjust measures imposed on it. He also said that he cherished the positions of the brother leader of the revolution in confronting imperialism and its plots against peoples. In his message, the North Korean president also stressed the cohesion between the Great Jamahiriyah and North Korea in facing up to the colonial-imperialist schemes.

Libya: North Korean Foreign Minister Makes Statement Before Departing

LD0505184896 Tripoli JANA in English 1815 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al-Maa [May] 5, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — Kim Yong-nam, member of the Politburo of the Labour Party, member of the Executive Council and foreign minister of North Korea, and the delegation in his company this afternoon left Tripoli after a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

Seeing off the North Korean foreign minister were the secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation as well as the secretary general for Asian Affairs, the assistant secretary general for the Affairs of International Cooperation, the head of the Asian Department to the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation and the ambassador and members of the North Korean embassy to the Great Jamahiriyah.

The foreign minister made a statement to JANA before he left the Great Jamahiriyah in which he lauded the deeply rooted relations of friendship and cooperation which exist between the two friendly countries of the Great Jamahiriyah and North Korea. He asserted that he discussed during this visit the prospects of enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields between the two countries were discussed.

He commended the colossal civilisational achievements reaslied for the Libyan Arab people in all fields thanks to the Great Al-Fatih [September] Revolution.

He reaffirmed the support and solidarity of North Korea with the Libyan Arab people in its courageous resistance against the imperialist-(?colonialist plots).

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Explosion Guts British Insurance Offices

*NC0505063496 Paris AFP in English
0623 GMT 5 May 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, May 5 (AFP) — An explosion ripped through a major Bahraini business complex before dawn Sunday [5 May], starting a huge fire which damaged stores and the offices of a British insurance firm but causing no injuries, witnesses said.

The explosion took place around 1 a.m. (2200 GMT) [4 May], gutting the Norwich insurance firm offices, two other offices and a toy shop and other stores, the witnesses said. The fire caused by the blast raged for three hours.

The causes of the blast were not immediately clear.

Police roped off the area and prevented people from entering the building which is owned by the Yussef ibn Ahmad Kanoo group, one of the biggest trading firms in the Gulf.

Bahrain: Pre-Dawn Explosions Hit Foreign, Other Businesses

*NC0505072496 Paris AFP in English
0709 GMT 5 May 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, May 5 (AFP) — At least four separate pre-dawn explosions hit foreign and other businesses across the Bahraini capital Manama on Sunday [5 May], starting fires that gutted several of them but causing no injuries, witnesses said.

Bahrain: Details of 5 May Bahrain Explosions

*NC0505074596 Paris AFP in English
0724 GMT 5 May 96*

["Four Pre-Dawn Explosions Hit Foreign and Bahraini Businesses"— AFP headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, May 5 (AFP) — At least four separate pre-dawn explosions hit foreign and other businesses across the Bahraini capital Manama on Sunday, starting fires that gutted several of them but causing no injuries, witnesses said.

One explosion rocked a major commercial center housing Bahraini and foreign businesses, including the offices of the Bahrain Norwich Union Insurance Co. which were gutted by a fire that followed the blast, witnesses said.

Two clothing store outlets owned by the same Indian company, Sana, but at different parts of the capital were also gutted in fires triggered by explosions, they added.

A store selling Western, Arabic and Indian music cassettes was also destroyed following a similar incident, they said.

It was the worst series of attacks against foreign businesses since political unrest erupted in December 1994 in this Gulf Arab archipelago neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Bahrain: 'Government Official' Cited on Manama Explosions

*NC0505104596 Paris AFP in English
1035 GMT 5 May 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, May 5 (AFP) — Nine pre-dawn explosions triggered by booby-trapped cigarette packages hit foreign and other businesses in Bahrain on Sunday, causing millions of dollars in damage but no injuries, a government official said.

Bahrain: Unnamed Official—Bahrain Explosions Terrorist Acts

*NC0505112596 Paris AFP in English
1051 GMT 5 May 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, May 5 (AFP) — Nine pre-dawn explosions triggered by booby-trapped cigarette packets hit foreign and other firms in Bahrain on Sunday, causing millions of dollars in damage but no injuries, a government official said.

"The explosions took place in different parts of Bahrain, including several in Manama," he said.

"Initial results of the investigation show they were caused by cigarette packets filled with explosives and flammable products."

"The fires caused by the explosions caused damage estimated at millions of dollars, but no casualties," he said on condition he not be named.

"These are terrorist acts which are part of a plot aimed at harming the country's economy and stability and frightening people," the official said.

Bahrain: 'Opposition' on 5 May Explosions in Manama

*NC0505103696 Paris AFP in English
1013 GMT 5 May 96*

["Collective Punishment Fuels Violence, Bahraini Opposition Says"—AFP headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, May 5 (AFP) — A surge of anti- government violence in Bahrain is a "reaction to the collective punishment" carried out

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by the authorities, the spokesman for a London-based opposition group said Sunday [5 May].

"We have always called for peaceful protests," the Bahrain Freedom Movmement's Mansur al-Jamri told AFP. "But the acts of violence and collective punishment meted out by the government force some to react violently."

He accused the authorities of arresting activists' family members and neighbors as part of a harsh crackdown on a new wave of anti- government unrest which erupted in January.

Jamri added that Sunday's attacks on foreign and other businesses in Manama coincided with the 40th day after the execution of Issa Qambar, a Shiite Moslem convicted of murdering a police officer during unrest in 1994.

While rejecting violence, Jamri said the attacks targeted "the government and those who are considered close to the government."

At least four separate pre-dawn explosions hit foreign and other businesses across the Bahraini capital Manama on Sunday, starting fires that damaged or destroyed several of them but causing no injuries, witnesses said.

Fires triggered by explosions damaged the Bahrain offices of the British company Norwich Union Insurance Co. and gutted two clothing stores owned by the Sana group of India, witnesses said.

A store selling Western, Arabic and Indian music cassettes was also destroyed following a similar incident.

It was the worst string of attacks against foreign businesses since political unrest erupted in December 1994 in this Gulf Arab archipelago neighboring Saudi Arabia.

The unrest has been spearheaded by Shiite Moslems who are demanding the Sunni-led government restore parliament which it suspended in 1975.

Bahrain: Official Paper—Punish Terrorists Without Pity

NC0605093696 Paris AFP in English 0831 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, May 6 (AFP)— Saboteurs who damaged or destroyed businesses in an unprecedented bombing wave are "terrorists" who must be punished without pity, a Bahraini newspaper warned Monday [6 May].

"We are facing a terrorist organization which has adopted the horrible methods of terror and which is acting on instructions given by its leaders abroad," said AKBHAR AL-KHALIJ newspaper which reflects the official view.

Bahraini newspapers have previously blamed Iran for 17 months of unrest led by Shiite Muslims demanding the Sunni-led government restore the parliament it suspended in 1975.

The assailants "claim to act in the people's interests but the people see them as cowards and urge that they be punished without the slightest pity," AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ said.

Nine explosions triggered by booby-trapped cigarette packets hit local and foreign businesses in Bahrain before dawn on Sunday, starting fires that caused millions of dollars in damage but no injuries, officials said.

The attacks occurred on the 40th day after a Shiite Muslim, 'Isa Qambar, was executed by firing squad for murdering a police officer during political unrest last year.

At least 21 people have died in the unrest.

Bahrain: Sunni Muslim Leader Acquitted of Unrest Charges

NC0505143596 Paris AFP in English 1307 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Manama, May 5 (AFP) — A Bahraini court on Sunday [5 May] acquitted a Sunni Moslem opposition leader of charges that he promoted anti-government unrest and worked with "terrorist groups" overseas, an Interior Ministry official said.

"Ahmad al-Shamlan was found not guilty by Bahrain's state security court and was acquitted," the official said.

Al-Shamlan, a lawyer, was arrested on February 8 on charges of "collaboration with terrorist organizations abroad," and of playing "an active role" in the unrest as well as "promoted violence and acts of sabotage."

But he was released from jail on April 22 after police questioning, lawyers said. He had rejected the accusations during court hearings.

The lawyer belongs to a group of Sunni and Shiite Moslem opposition leaders who led a petition drive in 1994 for the restoration of parliament, which the Sunni-led authorities suspended in 1975.

The authorities said around 600 people have been detained in Bahraini prisons since the unrest erupted in December 1994, while lawyers said more than 2,000

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have been arrested in the last five months alone. [passage omitted]

Bahrain: WAKH Reports on 'Arson Incidents' in Manama

JN0505131196 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1246 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 5 May (WAKH) — Several arson incidents occurred at a number of shops early this morning.

The Civil Defense and Fire Departments received reports of fires at a number of clothing stores, toy shops, and a music store in various parts of Manama.

The fires caused damage in some shops, while losses were very slight at other shops.

Firemen found a number incendiary devices in cigarette boxes which were later defused.

The security and criminal investigation departments are continuing their investigations into these incidents in order to identify the culprits.

Qatar

Qatar: Iran's Foruzandeh—Iran Seeks Coexistence With Neighbors

LD0505103896 Tehran IRNA in English 1017 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 5, IRNA — Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Foruzandeh Saturday evening in Doha stressed that Iran wants to live in peace and tranquility with its neighbors.

Foruzandeh who arrived in Doha Saturday on a four-day official visit, made the remark in a meeting with the Qatari State Minister for Defense Affairs Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Abdallah Al Thani.

He condemned the hostile propaganda of the enemies of Islam, the U.S. and Israel in particular, alleging Iran of making efforts to gain access to nuclear arms.

The Iranian minister said that the U.S. and the Zionist regime have launched baseless propaganda against Iran to create tension and thus justify their illegitimate presence in the region.

Iran has no objective but peaceful deployment of the nuclear energy and the reports on inspection of Iranian installations by representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency are proof of this fact, stressed the minister.

Qatar: Iranian Defense Minister Criticizes U.S. Arms Sales

LD0505192996 Tehran IRNA in English 1909 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, May 5, IRNA — The amir of qatar, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, in a meeting with the visiting Iranian defense minister, Mohammad Foruzandeh, voiced his country's readiness for taking wider practical steps for expanding relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and providing unlimited facilities for promotion of commercial relations between the two countries.

Mohammad Foruzandeh, who had arrived in Doha on Saturday [4 May] at the head of a delegation, conferred with the amir of Qatar, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, on Sunday.

Iran's defense minister conveyed the greetings of President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to the amir of Qatar and described relations between the two countries as "very good".

Touching on the poisonous propaganda launched by the U.S. against Iran in the region, Foruzandeh said these propaganda were aimed at facilitating American arms deal to nations of the Persian Gulf region meant to trigger tension in the area.

Defense minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran also hinted at the crimes of the Zionist regime in south Lebanon and stressed the necessity for greater coordination among the regional countries for preventing the Zionist regime's expansionism.

Foruzandeh voiced Iran's interest in taking practical steps for strengthening and expanding relations between the two countries, specifically in defense matters.

Amir of Qatar sent his warm greetings to the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran and underscored the necessity for expanding and strengthening relations between the two countries.

Iran's defense minister also met with the minister of state for defense affairs and deputy commander in chief of the armed forces of Qatar, Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Abdallah Al Thani on Sunday. The two sides exchanged views on mutual relations and defense cooperation.

Qatar: Iranian Defense Minister Meets With Amir

LD0505191796 Tehran IRNA in English 1817 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, May 5, IRNA — The defense minister of Islamic Republic of Iran,

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Mohammad Foruzandeh, in visit to Qatar aimed at expanding mutual relations, conferred with the Amir of Qatar, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, here Sunday.

Foruzandeh also met with the minister of state for defense affairs and deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Abdallah Al Thani. The two sides concentrated on expansion of mutual cooperation between the two countries.

Iran's defense minister who arrived in Doha on Saturday [4 May] for a four day visit told 'AL-RAYAH' daily that there was a possibility that Iran and Qatar would enter into a defense cooperation pact.

Foruzandeh added that Iran has no hostile intention towards the Persian Gulf countries and is committed to peace and stability in the region.

The Iranian minister rejected allegations on Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons and stressed that Tehran has signed all international pacts banning possession of atomic warfare.

Qatar: State Minister Confers With Iranian Defense Minister

JN0605084596 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0705 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Doha, 6 May (WAKH) — Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Abdallah Al Thani, minister of state for defense affairs and deputy general commander of the Qatari Armed Forces, conferred with Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Foruzandeh here this morning.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY said that discussions dealt with a number of issues related to boosting and upgrading relations between Qatar and Iran, particularly in the defense areas.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Lebanon's al-Hariri Begins Private Visit

NC0405133696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left Beirut at 1430 today to begin a private visit to Saudi Arabia.

Earlier today he met with the Italian ambassador and discussed with him the ongoing preparations for Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli's visit to Lebanon on Monday [6 May] at the head of an EU troika delegation.

In press remarks published today, Prime Minister al-Hariri announced that consultative firms are assessing the damage caused by the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon. He pointed out that the aggression sought to undermine the country's reconstruction effort. He stressed that Israel must withdraw from south Lebanon in line with UN resolutions.

Saudi Arabia: Paper Says Unrest in Bahrain Destabilization Plot

NC0605102996 Paris AFP in English 0936 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, May 6 (AFP)—The anti-government unrest in Bahrain shows the Gulf Arab states face a plot aimed at destabilizing them, a Saudi newspaper said Monday [6 May].

The unprecedented attacks on businesses in Bahrain on Monday [as received] "amount to terrorist crimes which aim only to destroy and undermine the economy" of Bahrain, according to AL-JAZIRAH which reflects the official Saudi view.

"These terrorist crimes also show that the countries of the GCC (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar) are targetted by a criminal plot which seeks to destabilize them," it added.

Nine explosions triggered by booby-trapped cigarette packets hit local and foreign businesses in Bahrain before dawn on Sunday, starting fires that caused millions of dollars in damage but no injuries, officials said.

At least 21 people have died in the unrest led by Shiite Muslims demanding that the Sunni-led authorities restore the parliament they suspended in 1975.

Saudi Arabia has said several times it would help Bahrain if the authorities in Manama requested it.

Saudi Arabia was the target of a bombing last November when a bomb blew up a US center used to train the Saudi national guard, killing five Americans and two Indians.

Riyadh last month announced it arrested four Saudi Muslim militants in connection with the attack.

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Cleric's 'Attack' on Israel, Peace Process Noted

NC0405113696 Paris AFP in English 1049 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, May 4 (AFP) — A senior Saudi cleric launched a stinging attack on Israel and the Middle East peace process, accusing the Jewish state of "sowing the seeds of hate" during its offensive in Lebanon, the Saudi press reported Saturday.

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The imam of Mecca, Sheikh Saleh ibn Hamed, said in Friday prayers at the Grand Mosque in Islam's holiest city that violence such as the attack on Lebanon would "unleash reserves of hate which are not limited to a single organisation or party" but which are felt "by every Arab and Moslem."

The sermon, one of the most violently anti-Israeli preached in Saudi Arabia since the start of the peace process, was heard by more than one million Moslems finishing the annual pilgrimage in Mecca and was published on the front page of Saudi newspapers.

"Operation Grapes of Wrath sowed the seeds of hate and vengeance, and lessened confidence in the international community," said the imam, criticizing "the major powers who defended this aggression and denied the defenders of a just cause the right to resistance."

"It is the right of all the oppressed to defend themselves if they have no other means of recovering their rights, and they should not be blamed (for resorting to violence) if the mediator with their enemy is not fair," he added, in apparent reference to the United States.

More than 170 people died in south Lebanon during Israel's 16-day offensive against Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerillas before a ceasefire came into force on April 27 after mediation by the United States and France.

Sheikh Hamid asked why "the peace and security of only one party and one people is taken into consideration" in the current peace process.

"What kind of peace foresees the military superiority of one party over another? What kind of peace leaves wrecked homes in its shadow ... and considers the reply to aggression to be terrorism?" he asked.

"They are building a fragile peace which will fall apart each time an angry wind blows," added the imam. "Those who make the decision and who use force to pacify opponents of the peace process are following a false path."

Sheikh Hamed criticized "world leaders who fly into fits of anger when a single bullet is fired at an occupying power, but who do not condemn the massacre at Cana," in south Lebanon, where 102 civilians sheltering in a UN compound were killed by Israeli shelling.

Saudi Arabia condemned the Israeli offensive in Lebanon, aimed at stamping out Hezbollah rocket attacks on northern Israel, and said it would wait for a global peace agreement in the Middle East before normalising relations with the Jewish state.

Yemen

Yemen: Agreement With Eritrea To Be Signed in 'a Few Days'

MM0305120896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 May 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Faysal Makram, Afhraf al-Faqiyy, and Jihan al-Husayni: "Egyptian Move To Prepare for 'Ali Salih-Afwerki Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa, Cairo — AL-HAYAH has learned that Cairo started yesterday to make contacts with Yemen and Eritrea to prepare for a summit between Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki in the presence of President Husni Mubarak in order to clear the air between Sanaa and Asmara following their agreement to refer their dispute over the al- Hanish al-Kabir island to international arbitration.

Meanwhile, a high-ranking Yemeni Government official has confirmed that Yemen and Eritrea will sign the arbitration principles in Paris within a few days through their foreign ministers in the presence of representatives from the French Government, which is playing the role of a mediator, and from Egypt and Ethiopia.

The Yemeni official said that the agreement on principles obliges Yemen and Eritrea to accept international arbitration, but it is not an agreement formula to resolve the dispute over the Hanish island. Each side will choose some members of the arbitration panel. And the two sides will agree on one member of the panel who will have the casting vote, and the final verdict will be binding.

The official pointed out that the Eritreans displayed rigidity as regards to the need to define the disputed area, "but the efforts exerted by French Envoy Francis Gutmann and the flexibility displayed by the Yemeni Government caused Eritrea to leave the issue of defining the disputed area to the arbitration panel, and Yemen agreed."

The official pointed out that, if the two countries do not reach an agreement on the member with the casting vote on the arbitration panel, he can be chosen by the International Court of Justice or another party. [passage omitted]

Yemen: Salih—Yemen Chose Peaceful Solution to Island Problem

JN0405174696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic and

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commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, visited the air base in al-Hudaydah. [passage omitted]

The brother president delivered a speech to the brother officers, NCO's, and soldiers in which he congratulated them on the occasion of the blessed 'Id al-Adha, and hailed their heroic and courageous positions during the battle for defending the unity of the homeland.

The brother president said our country chose a peaceful solution and political battle as an ideal means for solving the Hanish al- Kabir island problem. He said it was agreed in principle to sign a memorandum of understanding during the next week to refer the dispute to international arbitration.

The brother president discussed several national issues and developments in his speech.

The brother president also visited the naval base. [passage omitted]

Yemen: Salih Claims 'Evidence' of Island Ownership

JN0405201796 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in English 1930 GMT 4 May 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yesterday evening the president, General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, met in the city of al-Hudaydah with religious scholars, ulema, social figures, representatives of political parties and organizations, youth and women, businessmen and farmers, and citizens from different directorates of the Governorate of al- Hudaydah.

The president expressed his best wishes on 'Id al-Adha al-mubarak [blessed], the annual anniversary of Labor Day, and the upcoming National Day of the Republic of Yemen on 21 May.

The president reviewed the significance of field visits to a number of governorates by senior state officials during the 'Id holidays. He also spoke about developments related to the Eritrean aggression and occupation of the Yemeni Greater Hanish Island. He reiterated the country's commitment to a peaceful solution to the problem, pointing out the recent agreement of principles to resort to arbitration. He said this was reached through French good offices, expressing hope that the Eritrean Government will cooperate with the selected arbitration board. The president affirmed that Yemen has historical evidence that Greater Hanish island is owned completely by Yemen.

He then reviewed the different stages of the economic program and the economic situation in the country, affirming that a brighter future is waiting everyone despite the existing difficulties.

The president also addressed the reality of a multi-party system, affirming that the system means honest competition and not steering problems and seditions. President Salih affirmed the country's commitment to democracy and ballot-boxes in choosing its leaders and officials. [video shows Salih delivering speech, audience listening and applauding]

Yemen: President Says Accord With Eritrea To Be Signed 'Next Week'

NC0405204196 Paris AFP in English 2007 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, May 4 (AFP) — An accord in principle proposed by France to solve a Red Sea dispute between Yemen and Eritrea will be signed next week, Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih said Saturday [4 May].

"It has been agreed in principle to sign the accord during next week and to take the conflict to international arbitration," he said, quoted by the official agency SABA'.

But he did not say where or when the accord would be signed, although the under secretary at the foreign ministry, Ghalib 'Ali Jamil, said the signing ceremony would be staged in Paris.

"To solve the problem of the Yemeni island of Greater Hanish our country has chosen the peaceful path," Salih told staff at the western air base of al-Hudaydah.

Planes stationed at the base were used in the three-day battle in December between Yemeni and Eritrean forces, when Asmara captured the island of Hanish al-Kabir (Greater Hanish). Nine soldiers from both sides were killed in the fighting.

Under the French proposal the two countries agreed to settle the dispute in an arbitration court rather than at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

But the statement from the French Foreign Ministry announcing the accord did not specify the exact area of the conflict, and Sanaa has insisted that it only relates to Hanish al-Kabir and not to the whole archipelago of nine islands to which it belongs.

Asmara however says that the conflict was about all the nine islands, which lie at the mouth of the Bab al-Mandab guarding access to busy shipping lanes in the Red Sea, and says the court should define the area of conflict.

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Yemen: Foreign Ministry Praises French Role in Reaching Agreement

JN0505064396 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 5 May 96

[Statement by Yemeni Foreign Ministry in Sanaa on 4 May — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni Foreign Ministry expresses its deep satisfaction with and appreciation of the success of the French Government's efforts to bring about the principles agreement between our country and Eritrea. This agreement is the sound basis for a peaceful settlement to the dispute between the two countries on issues related to regional sovereignty and maritime borders.

The ministry praises the genuine efforts made by Ambassador Francis Gutmann, envoy of French President Jacques Chirac, to bring the views of the two countries closer and end the dispute through international arbitration, in accordance with international law. This settlement should stave off harm from all parties, protect the interests of Yemen and Eritrea, boost security and stability of the countries and peoples of the region, and serve international navigation in the Red Sea.

The Foreign Ministry also expresses its appreciation for all the sincere efforts made by Egypt, Ethiopia, and the international community, led by UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, which helped reach this peaceful agreement.

The Foreign Ministry emphasizes that this solution is the proper approach to bolster relations between Yemen and Eritrea and develop confidence, which is necessary for creating an atmosphere conducive to the progress of these relations.

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Iraq: Al-Anbari Cited on Talks With UN Delegation

JN0305194296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1850 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] United Nations, 3 May (INA)—Head of the Iraqi delegation to the fourth round of dialogue with the United Nations on oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs of the Iraqi people, will arrive in New York within the next two days.

An INA correspondent in New York said that Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, will arrive in New York from Paris after he briefed officials in France and Russia on the results of the previous rounds of dialogue.

In a press statement, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari said that France and Russia exert efforts to reach solutions to pave the way for an agreement between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat.

France and Russia had earlier expressed dissatisfaction with the interference of the United States and Britain in the negotiations between Iraq and the United Nations on oil for food, medicine, and the other basic needs.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari characterized as positive and constructive a statement French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette made yesterday to the French magazine PARIS MATCH. Dr. al-Anbari said Iraq has negotiated seriously and in good faith, noting that the two delegations were about to reach an agreement on 10 April after a series of working sessions with the UN General Secretariat. However, the United States and Britain interfered in an attempt to foil the dialogue.

The head of the Iraqi delegation said his visits to France and Russia were to brief two permanent Security Council member states on the dialogue with the United Nations. [passage omitted]

Iraq: 'Aziz on Prospects for Success of UN Talks

JN0505092696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 May (INA) — Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said it was agreed with UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali to resume the talks between Iraq and the United Nations on oil for food and medicine tomorrow, 6 May.

In a statement to INA a short while ago, 'Aziz said: Our delegation was instructed to go to New York. Answering a question by an INA correspondent on prospects for the success of the fourth round of talks, Tariq 'Aziz said: During the previous rounds, the delegations of Iraq and the UN General Secretariat managed to reach a good level of understanding on all aspects of this issue. However, U.S.-British interference, as we said before, obstructed an agreement. Prospects for the success of the fourth round depend on how willing the Security Council and the General Secretariat are to remove this interference and allow the delegations of Iraq and the United Nations to reach an agreement.

'Aziz added that U.S.-British interference, which took place previously and was revealed in the final stage of the third round, was strongly criticized at the Security Council. This is illegal conduct which has tendentious political purposes and contradicts the understanding reached by the Security Council members not to interfere in the talks.

Tariq 'Aziz said: If this interference continues in any form in the fourth round, America and Britain will then be responsible for the failure of the talks. Iraq has demonstrated every seriousness and balanced flexibility in dealing with the issue. It also patiently continued with the talks to reach an acceptable and balanced agreement.

Tariq 'Aziz added: Now that these talks have taken all this long time, we would like to note that we entered talks with the UN General Secretariat on the oil-for-food and medicine formula as a phased and temporary short-term solution awaiting the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. Although we truly believe that we have fulfilled all our essential commitments related to the implementation of Paragraph 22, we showed this flexibility so as to maintain good and objective relations with the Security Council, as well as to give additional opportunity to the member states of the Security Council, which adopt objective stands, to work as soon as possible toward implementing Paragraph 22.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said: If the American and British sides insist on undermining the oil-for-food and medicine talks, or on prolonging them, it would be more reasonable and objective to concentrate on implementing Paragraph 22 and fully lifting the economic siege in accordance with Resolution 687 without any additional restrictions or conditions.

Tariq 'Aziz said: The UN Special Commission must now work swiftly, earnestly, and without any hesitation to close these files and report to the Security Council that the requirements of Part C of Resolution 687 have been fulfilled, that the essential objectives of Resolution 687, regarding the weapons file, have been met, and that Iraq has demonstrated sufficient seriousness, patience, and cooperation with the Special Commission after reopening the files last August. Therefore, the policy of procrastination, taking a long time to close files, and raising secondary issues that have nothing to do with the essence of the issue are a nonobjective method that has no technical justification. In fact, this method only

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serves tendentious political objectives supported by the United States.

Iraq: Paper on Need To Stop U.S., UK 'Interference' in UN Talks

JN0505075796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0620 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 May (INA) — In an article today, AL-THAWRAH asserts the need to stop illegal interference in the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations on oil for food, medicine, and other necessities for the Iraqi people. The international community is now aware that two out of the 15 Security Council members have prevented Iraq and the United Nations from reaching a memorandum of understanding.

The paper adds: Iraq has exposed the unwarranted, illegal interference by Washington and London in the progress of the talks. The Security Council members have opposed this interference, which disrupts the work of the international organization, obstructs the negotiations between the two sides, and increases the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The paper says the British envoy tried to rescind statements made by British officials by saying that he personally had not made such statements. Also, Albright said a few days ago that she is optimistic that the talks will succeed, forgetting that she was the one who opposed signing an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations.

The paper underlines the positive and optimistic statements by Russia and France, as well as PRC support for the talks. These supportive and optimistic stands by permanent and other Security Council member states will definitely reflect positively on the fourth round of the dialogue. This will stop the interference of the United States and Britain and check all attempts to foil the dialogue. This will lead to an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations that promotes Iraq's interests and implements Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

The paper adds that Iraq has cooperated positively with the United Nations and negotiated seriously and in good faith. The world testified that Iraq managed the negotiations competently. The next round is a test of the credibility of others in dealing with international resolutions.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Those who speak more than others about international legitimacy are required to respect it and deal honestly with it. They should not use double standards because things are very clear. Daylight cannot be concealed by an old sieve.

Iraq: Barzani Views U.S. Peace Efforts, Ties With PUK

NC0605120396 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 4 May 96 p 9

[Report by 'Atif Saqr in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mas'ud Barzani, Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] leader, stated that the United States emphasized to Iraqi Kurdish leaders that it will continue its protection of the Kurdish areas and its commitment to continue efforts aimed at achieving peace inside Iraqi Kurdistan. In a statement to AL-AHRAM during his visit to Damascus, Barzani pointed out that protection of the Kurdish areas will continue as long as the current circumstances continue. He noted that he received U.S. assurances during his recent reception of Robert Deutch, the U.S. official in charge of the north Gulf affairs at the State Department. Deutsch visited north Iraq to work out an agreement ending the differences between the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] in north Iraq.

Barzani said the U.S. party will define the next step that will be taken to achieve this goal. He denied that the United States supports the establishment of a Kurdish state in north Iraq. He noted that all he has heard from the U.S. party is that it supports the Kurdish people's legitimate national rights within the framework of Iraq's unity. He said that the United States, Britain, and France support giving the Kurdish people their legitimate rights, but within Iraq, and that they no longer evade the Kurdish issue or consider it an Iraqi domestic affair.

Discussing the talks he held in Damascus and the Syrian stance on the Kurdish issue, Barzani said that ties with Syria are old and historic and that his visit was in response to an official invitation. He said that he discussed in Damascus Iraq's future and security in the region. He noted that the discussions on security in the region dealt with the common borders between Syria and Iraq and regional and international interference in Iraqi affairs. He stressed that Syria backs the Kurdish people's right, but within the context of Iraq's unity. Barzani said that Turkey's stance on the Kurdish issue is linked to the West's and that he did not notice Turkey adopting a distinguished stance in this respect.

In response to a question on Iran's stance in view of the fact that there are Kurds in Iran, Barzani said: What is happening in Iraq affects the interests of other countries. The Iranians want their relations with these countries to be based on common interests. He said that imposition of custodianship on Iraq is rejected. He stressed that the [old] formula of relations between the Kurdish and the central government in Baghdad

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is no longer useful or viable. He pointed out that the Kurdish people support Iraq's unity and did not call for secession from it, but the formula of relations with Iraq must be developed. He said: We believe that the federal formula will be more practical and realistic than any other one. The relationship between Kurdistan and the central government, he said, must be defined on a federal basis.

Barzani said that the economic situation in Kurdistan may be better than that in central and south Iraq, noting that the countryside in Kurdistan has achieved self-sufficiency, but that there are some problems is the Kurdish cities.

Regarding relations between the KDP and the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party [PKK], which takes shelter in north Iraq, Barzani said that the situation has been calm since the KDP agreed to a cease-fire with the PKK. He noted that the mountainous terrain of north Iraq and the 300-km long border help the PKK members to take shelter in north Iraq. He said: Describing the PKK as terrorist is a matter that concerns the United States and Turkey. He noted that the United States has introduced a clause in the prospective draft agreement between the KDP and the PUK considering the PKK to be terrorist. He stressed that this clause does not concern the KDP. He pointed out that the other clauses in the draft agreement are still under discussion. He said that although differences continue between the KDP and the PUK, they are committed to the truce. He said that he hopes that a final peace will be reached. He noted that the issue of the withdrawal of the KDP forces from the outskirts of Irbil, the capital of the district, and of the PUK from the center of the city is still pending, stressing that it is an important issue.

Iraq: Saddam Said Tightening Security Amid Assassination Rumors

NC0505150096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in the Iraqi opposition say that the regime's oppressive apparatuses launched a sweeping arrest campaign in the cities of al-Dur and [indistinct name] late last month. According to the sources, the campaign was launched immediately after the tyrant's recent visit to the two cities, because of the lukewarm reception he was accorded by the population there. Only a few, mostly security and intelligence agents, came out to welcome him.

Moreover, reliable sources say Saddam has given the orders to institute a seven-level rather than the five-level security system for his personal protection in view of reports about new attempts to assassinate him.

Iraq: Turkey Reportedly Attacks Kurdish Villages 4 May

JN0405195496 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 4 May 96

[All place names as heard]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fierce and indiscriminate shelling and bombardment by the Turkish artillery and aircraft on 4 May forced the inhabitants of the Tarwansh village in the Balwari ghala area, and the villages of Bagdawdah, Shamaylah, and Bet Nuri to flee.

Turkish artillery and aircraft began their fierce and indiscriminate shelling and bombardment of the defenseless villages in the Balwari Ghala area on the night of 25-26 April. The villages that were attacked are Tarwansh, Halowa, Bagdawdah, Wudereh, and Kit Dawdah.

Reports say that this unwarranted shelling and bombardment by the Turkish army wounded many civilians in these villages, and heavily damaged houses and destroyed cattle in the Tarwansh village, where 35 artillery shells fell in one day. Even the village's mosque and school were destroyed. The shelling and bombardment forced many citizens to flee, furious and disturbed.

The Turkish army shelled the Balwari Ghala villages last month. At that time, an official spokesman for our party denounced these attacks and called for their immediate halt.

Iraq: Army Resumes Attacks on Kurdish Villages in Northern Iraq

LD0505141596 Tehran IRNA in English 1238 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kordestan Prov., May 5, IRNA — The Iraqi Army has resumed fresh artillery attacks on regions controlled by Iraqi Kurdish dissidents, the radio run by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) reported on Sunday.

The radio, monitored in this western Iranian city, said that the Iraqi helicopters and artillery units shelled, from land and air, 10 villages in Karkuk and Irbil provinces last week.

It said that a number of villagers were injured in the artillery attacks, which also caused heavy damage to property.

Iraq: Regime Said Inciting Escaped Iranian 'Terrorists'

NC0405151496 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The offices of the ruling regime in Baghdad are inciting criminal terrorists who are

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wanted by the law in the Islamic Republic of Iran to escape to Iraqi territory, in a clear attempt to interfere in the Islamic Republic's internal affairs.

Sources of the Islamic Uprising Television [Tilivizion al-Intifadah al-Islamiyah] in Iraq say that the authorities have issued strict orders to their troops along the border with Iran to receive the criminal terrorists who escape from Iran and give them all assistance.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Claims Regime Jamming Foreign Broadcasts

NC0305150296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi citizens, both in the country and outside, continue to follow with deep interest the opposition radios programs (?beamed) to Iraq. Our correspondent says that despite attempts by the Saddam Husayn regime to black out the opposition radios' reports, Iraqi citizens follow around the clock the wavelengths that convey the voice of the opposition, which frightens the regime.

It should be recalled that the regime is also jamming most Arab and foreign radios heard in Iraq, in a desperate attempt by the regime's intelligence agencies to prevent the free sons of our people from hearing the voice of right and freedom.

Iraq: National Accord Spokesman on Plans To Launch Weekly Paper

JN0405125696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 4 May 96 pp 12, 3

[Report by Mirvat Suwaydah "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The Iraqi National Accord [INA] movement, an exiled group opposed to the regime of Saddam Husayn, is planning to launch a weekly newspaper this month, an INA member said Friday.

Harun Muhammad, an INA spokesman, said IRAQ AL-MUSTAQBAL (Iraq of the future) will cover Iraqi internal affairs and will work on "exposing the immoral practices of the Iraqi regime."

"We will also cover the news of Iraqi opposition groups everywhere," Mr. Muhammad told the JORDAN TIMES, stressing that the paper will be the first publication to represent various Iraqi opposition factions.

Iraqi opposition is composed of four main groups: the Nationalist secular group led by Sunni Muslims, the Kurdish movement, the leftist movement composed of the Iraqi Communist and Ba'th Parties and the Shi'ites. While the leftist and religious groups are historically affiliated with Syria, the INA, which, its members say, was established by former Iraqi army generals and diplomats in the early 90s, is the only group with offices in Jordan.

Another 20-25 Iraqi groups opposed to the regime of Saddam Husayn are still awaiting approval from the government to open offices here.

The government says it will grant permits to them on a case-by-case basis.

Traditionally, Iraqi opposition movements are riddled by internal disputes. It was not immediately clear what links could other groups have with IRAQ AL-MUSTAQBAL, which will join another six weeklies issued by Iraqi opposition groups.

"Baghdad used to focus on the news of Iraqi opponents outside Iraq but the new paper will concentrate on the news of our people living in Iraq," Mr. Muhammad said.

Last month, the INA launched a daily four-hour radio service via satellite. It was the seventh radio service operated by Iraqi dissidents—four radio stations broadcast from the northern district of Iraq, one from Syria and one from Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Muhammad said he expected the majority of the 15,000 copies of IRAQ AL-MUSTAQBAL to be distributed inside Iraq.

"We have the ability to distribute it in all cities inside Iraq. We have made all the necessary arrangements to make it available to the Iraqis living in Iraq," Mr. Muhammad said.

He said his movement rejects any foreign assistance in its struggle to topple the Iraqi regime and strives to ignite "an internal change" in his country.

"Through the paper we want to convey a message to the Iraqi people and tell them that change is the responsibility of all Iraqis and that we need their support to make it happen and we are confident that our people will move very soon," Mr. Muhammad said.

Iraq: Media Employees, Journalists Reportedly Banned From Travel

NC0505145696 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An informed Iraqi source has revealed that Saddam Husayn's presidential office has issued a classified decree prohibiting the granting of foreign travel approvals to all the employees of the Information Ministry, journalists, and authors.

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The source added that the decree was cabled to al-Turaybil border gate, which prevents men of the media and writers from leaving Iraq even if they have obtained travel permits.

The source said that the regime's security authorities are interrogating all media employees, journalists, and writers who have traveled outside Iraq about the reasons for their travel and who they met during their trips.

In another development, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT today reports that Jordanian border authorities are confiscating any Iraqi publications travelers are carrying with them from Baghdad since they were not screened by the Jordanian censors.

Iraq: 2 Northern Highways Reopened

JN0405200796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1838 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Al-Ta'mim, 360 km north of Baghdad, 4 May (INA)—Health and municipal authorities said that the Karkuk-al-Sulaymaniyah and Karkuk-Irbil highways in the northern part of Iraq were reopened after the preventive measures that led to their closure at the end of last year were no longer valid.

The monitoring section of the Health Ministry told INA that the two highways were closed because of the spread of Cholera in al-Sulaymaniyah and Irbil governorates. It also pointed out that it would monitor the epidemic situation and diagnose suspected cases in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region during the current season in order to cope with the possible spread of epidemics as a result of the deteriorating health and environmental situation and the absence of a central administration in these areas. [passage omitted]

Dr. Sa'dun Khalifah, head of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, told INA that the Society supplies the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region with medicine and also provides 6,000 families with blankets, heating requirements, detergents, and soap. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Baraq To Travel to U.S. To Formulate Written Defense Agreement

TA0305125496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq will leave for Washington on 6 May to formulate a written defense agreement between Israel and the United States, in the wake of the talks held there this week by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Barry Schweid, the AP correspondent in Washington, reports that Peres is not asking the United States to send troops — but rather what he terms technicians — to the Middle East in order to strengthen the peace process.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Minister Baraq will confer with Warren Christopher on 8 May.

Israel: Savir on Opening of Final-Status Talks in Taba

TA0405170196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 4 May 96

[Interview with Uri Savir, director general of the Foreign Ministry and coordinator of the peace talks, by political correspondent Shlomo Ganor in the studio on 4 May — recorded, in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; translated from Hebrew]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ganor] Mr. Savir, the talks on the permanent arrangement begin in Taba tomorrow. What positions will the Israeli delegation be presenting?

[Savir] I think our positions on Jerusalem, the need for security, security borders, the need to separate the two peoples, and our unwillingness to rule over the Palestinians are known and clear. However, we are talking three years of negotiations. What will guide us is our basic positions, the agreements we reached in the past, and a real desire to create a new reality since this will be the last set of negotiations; to attain a permanent arrangement with peaceful coexistence, with everybody controlling their own fate, and with full security for both peoples.

[Ganor] It is no secret that the Palestinian delegation will make one demand tomorrow, which is to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Is this compatible with the Israeli positions?

[Savir] Certainly not. There are very serious gaps about basic positions. We will be going into the toughest issues, and that is why it was decided that these negotiations would last up to three years. We will have to find solutions to all the questions, solutions which will meet some of the interests of both sides. There are points of principle on which we will not be able to compromise, while there are issues on which we will be able to work out a common reality. The main thing is to effect a separation between the two peoples, and create better cooperation based on it. All problems can be solved in such context. The Palestinians will be able to present their positions, as long as these are anchored in the Declaration of Principles and the cancellation of the Palestinian Charter. We will start negotiations, and based on our past experience we will also reach an agreement.

[Ganor] You talk about separating the two peoples, at a time when Israel's failure to redeploy in Hebron has already cast a heavy shadow on the opening of the talks tomorrow.

[Savir] So many times there was talk about heavy shadows, problems, difficulties, and lack of credibility, but in the end we overcame them. We, just like the Palestinians, are committed to the full implementation of the agreement, including Hebron. As to how exactly this will be done, working teams of security officials will meet in order to ensure security in Hebron — such a sensitive issue in this city — based on our commitment to implement the agreement. Security officials in the field will discuss this point with the Palestinians, simultaneously with the talks with Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas]. I have no doubt that a solution will be found based on the interim agreement.

[Ganor] How will you convince the Palestinian side that Israel will indeed abide by the agreements it has already signed?

[Savir] Reality will convince those who are still unconvinced. It seems to me that all in all both sides have become convinced. Occasionally we have had problems with timetables, but we managed to overcome very difficult obstacles. Together we have overcome violent opposition and terror, and we will also manage to overcome difficulties in the implementation due to security problems. Security is the apple of Israel's eye. We will implement Oslo B just like we implemented Oslo A, and we will begin negotiations on what one could call Oslo C.

[Ganor] The Oslo agreement allotted three years for the completion of the negotiations. Is this a realistic time frame in today's circumstances?

[Savir] Negotiations must be conducted with patience and nerves of steel since each side fights for its own interests. We have already seen that negotiations are not just a matter of give and take, but also the joint creation of a new reality. We are talking about the last, perhaps the most important chapter, and if we need the full three years then we will use them in full. If it takes less time,

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so be it. This is a very long time and we have acquired a great deal of experience. We are talking about burying once and for all the 100-year conflict between us and the Palestinians and starting a new chapter of peaceful coexistence, security, and mutual respect.

[Ganor] Mr. Savir, thank you very much.

Israel: Peres Presents 'Arafat Letter Affirming Charter Amendment

TA0505083096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the cabinet meeting this morning, the prime minister presented a letter he received from Yasir 'Arafat, together with its enclosures — the copies of the Palestine National Council's [PNC] resolutions on the amendment of the Palestinian Charter. He pointed out that the document reveals that the PNC has amended all the clauses that contradict the reciprocal PLO-Israel letters of recognition. The resolutions state: The charter is herewith amended through the annulment of the contradictory clauses. The resolutions further state: The PNC is delegating the redrafting of the Palestinian Charter to its legal committee.

This report was filed by our correspondent Yo'el Nir.

Israel: Peres Sends Letters to 'All' Arab Leaders, To Meet Husayn

TA0505105696 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 5 May 96 p 14

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the past few days, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres sent personal greetings to all the leaders of the Arab countries with which Israel has ties, on the occasion of the Muslim holiday of 'Id al-Fitr. In the letters, Peres explains Israel's motivations for Operation Grapes of Wrath, stressing that Israel had nothing against the Lebanese Government or population and that it launched the operation in self-defense.

In the letters, sent to Jordanian King Husayn, Egyptian President Mubarak, and the leaders of Tunisia, Morocco, Qatar, Oman, and other Arab countries, Peres stresses that Israel is committed to the Middle East peace process and that he is personally committed to the negotiations, and promises that the process will continue after the elections if he remains in power.

Some of the letters were written and printed on the prime minister's plane while he was on his way back from the United States, and Peres signed them personally. The letter to the Tunisian president will be presented today by Minister Yosi Beilin who is currently on a visit there.

The prime minister told MA'ARIV two days ago that he feels that the leaders of the Arab world took Israel's activity in Lebanon relatively lightly. "I believe we will get over the crisis and will come out stronger, even in our relations with the Arab countries," Peres said in reply to a question.

[A report by Smadar Peri on page 10 of Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 5 May adds: "Prime Minister Peres will meet King Husayn in Jordan over the coming weekend." The report says that the date of the meeting has not been set yet, and that the two will discuss bilateral agreements, the situation in Lebanon, and the "domestic situation in Iraq."]

Israel: Third Way Reveals Peres-U.S. Accord on Freezing Syria Talks

TA0605104296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0905 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Third Way leader Avigdor Qahalani said at a news conference today that both Labor and the Likud asked him and his movement to join them as a party division.

The Third Way further revealed that Israel and the United States have agreed that the negotiations with Syria will be frozen until after the Israeli elections. Nevertheless, a breakthrough in the negotiations with Syria — which means an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights down to the international border — is expected, according to The Third Way, to take place before the U.S. elections in November. Pe'erli Shahar reports on the news conference:

[Shahar] [passage omitted] Yehuda Har'el, second on The Third Way's list, revealed that U.S. Senate and House sources have told him of an arrangement in which Peres promised that the Labor government would withdraw to the international border before the U.S. elections in November. [passage omitted]

As for the arrangements on the Golan and in south Lebanon, Avigdor Qahalani says the problem of south Lebanon can be isolated. He presented a plan which offers an opportunity to test Syria's readiness to attain true peace with Israel. The plan speaks of two brigades — an Egyptian and a Jordanian one — replacing the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in south Lebanon. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Baraq on Lebanon, Hebron, Election Campaign

TA0305155696 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 3 May 96 p 9

[Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by correspondent 'Aliza Wallach; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Wallach] The opposition claims that you reached the agreement of understandings that ended Operation Grapes of Wrath without achieving anything. It is also making good use of the prime minister's remarks that the agreement of understandings would hold up until the elections.

[Baraq] The deterioration in the north in recent months is the outcome of a Hizballah decision, under Iranian instructions, to ignore all the understandings and shell the Galilee as heavily as it can before the Israeli elections so as to get rid of this government, since it is clear that if it is reelected, it will continue to lead the peace process, which is taking over the political reality of the Middle East. In fact, we initiated the operation in order to restore the 1993 understandings in an expanded and improved form, and to bring quiet to the Galilee and freedom of action to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. We achieved all that, and I believe even more than that. I did not expect more than a renewal of the understandings, and in fact we got them in writing, with a monitoring and supervisory mechanism, as well as an appended letter from the Americans, which details precisely what is meant by implementing our right of self-defense, and not only in relation to direct fire.

We do not need the American understanding for ourselves. We need the American understanding — behind which there is a Lebanese and Syrian understanding — that we will act not only if there is direct fire directed at our forces, but also against indirect sources — preparations for operations against the IDF from inside villages in the security zone. If the Lebanese do not find a way to act against these indirect elements, it is clear that we will maintain the right to act against them. When we add to that the tie to the resumption of the talks with Syria and Lebanon, when the Americans believe there will be quiet in the north, that is more than could have been anticipated on the day we started the operation.

We all wish Hani Himi [who was wounded in a katyusha attack] a speedy recovery, but I remind you that the operation, which lasted two weeks, ended without a single Israeli civilian fatality and without a single IDF fatality. It also ended with the bolstering of our deterrence against the Syrians. Anybody who has seen the weapons firing accurately at a Syrian radar-guided 57mm gun at Beirut airport understands that the IDF has that capability. It was used sparingly for various reasons, but we have the capability to which they do not have an answer.

In reference to the prime minister's remark, he did not mean what the opposition claims. Since both we and the Americans believe that the peace talks will be resumed after the elections — and based on the past, the quietest periods of Hizballah activity in the north took place during talks with the Syrians — the prime minister meant that the period preceding the elections is more sensitive, not because he thinks that the understandings will vanish after the elections. If we manage to reach a situation whereby these understandings hold up even for two years, as the previous ones did, that will be a major achievement because in less than two years we will know if we have a peace agreement with Syria and Lebanon. There will not be any problem with Hizballah because it will disband before then. If not, we will have formulated a new overall assessment of the situation. That is why the agreement of understandings reached this time is good and very important.

[Wallach] Nor does everybody see the cancellation of the clauses in the Palestinian Charter calling for Israel's destruction as an unequivocal achievement either, and some criticize your using words such as coming to terms, conspiracy, and fraud.

[Baraq] Those who say that there is a conspiracy are the same people who said that the efforts to cancel the charter would all be in vain. They are also the same people who claimed that the government did not act soon enough in Lebanon. Had we acted sooner, we would not have attained the political backing for the understandings, not after what happened in Qana. I am not angry with the Likud people since it is their duty to criticize changing circumstances. Their behavior is guided by the polls on the one hand, and they try to pose as Labor on the other. I understand their criticism, but it is not important since it is addressed at an experienced and smart nation which realizes that the charter has been repealed. It is true that writing the new charter will take half a year and that it would have been better for us if it were written tomorrow morning, but there are guidelines on how to write it. It must be written in such a way as not to include any clause contravening agreements with Israel or calling for Israel's destruction. This is exactly compatible with what was stipulated in the letters exchanged in September 1993 on which Rabin insisted so much.

[Wallach] Do you see a correlation between the cancellation of the charter and the pullout from Hebron?

[Baraq] Our commitment remains in effect, and we will abide by it, because this is the essence of a responsible

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democratic state and because we demand that the other side abide by the agreements. I would like to remind you that the agreement is not about the evacuation of Hebron. We will not evacuate any Jew from Hebron, not even from Tall al-Rumaythah. All we will be doing is transferring control over some Palestinian neighborhoods to the Palestinians (some 15,000 Arabs will remain in the neighborhoods under our control). In fact, the IDF will be changing its deployment in Hebron, making it tighter around the Jewish settlement in the city and the roads leading north and south. All we will be doing is redeploying in a way that will reflect the guiding principle of the entire arrangement: exercising minimum control over the Palestinians, and to the extent possible, allowing them to run their own affairs. The purpose of all this is that when deliberations on the permanent arrangement begin on Sunday [5 May] the reality will be that, to the extent possible, they will be in charge of their own people while we will be responsible for ours.

This involves a few preliminary stages, such as transferring civilian powers and changing the deployment in Hebron. I would say people need not go into mourning if the redeployment takes place after the elections. In my view, the Palestinians realize rather well that we will abide by our commitments. The main considerations must be maximal security for Israelis and Palestinians and reducing friction. These considerations have nothing to do with the elections, but one cannot ignore the fact that elections are in the air. I do not think it is of utmost importance that the final redeployment take place before the elections. As far as I am concerned, it may take place after the elections. Even then we will be abiding by our commitment, as long as this is agreed upon by the Palestinians.

[Wallach] Has the timing been discussed?

[Baraq] No. We have discussed various aspects of the issue, including some of the things that must be done before. There are considerations, pros and cons. I suppose this will be decided in the coming days. I feel that nothing bad or terrible will happen if the redeployment takes place after the elections.

[Wallach] What do you say to those who claim that the U.S. President came out in support of Labor's election campaign?

[Baraq] He did not come out in support or anything like that. The prime minister's visit at a time relatively close to the elections was very important. Should we have missed this opportunity to score achievements for Israel just because it occurred close to the elections? In the Knesset session this week I said to former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir from the podium: A former prime minister is sitting here, and I am sure he knows that all former prime ministers would have been happy and proud to return from the United States and announce such achievements to the people. The date on which they were attained does not matter because they benefit the State of Israel, the citizens of Israel, and their children. Relations with the United States have developed enormously in the past 20 years, including when the Likud was in power, and that is very good.

[Wallach] One week after Labor launched its election campaign, don't you feel it is still plodding along?

[Baraq] The exchanges heard this week in the Knesset were characteristic of preelection times. I said: I see empty seats bearing the names of Likud people who, I believe, do not identify or are pleased with the political acrobatics Bibi Netanyahu has been performing to get elected. I do not believe that 'Uzi Landau, Beni Begin, Mikha'el Eytan, and even former Prime Minister Shamir truly accept it, and that is why I think the public will not accept it either.

I think Bibi understands his real problem is that while Peres is much more popular than Labor, Bibi is far less popular than the Likud. The gap favoring Peres in the polls has become quite stable, especially if one considers the circumstances of the last few weeks. I hope it will remain more or less the same until the end. Incidentally, when we ask people, including Likud voters, about the character of the two candidates — who is more credible, who do you trust more, who can lead Israel in difficult times and withstand pressures, who is more experienced, who is more suitable — in each and every aspect the gap is much bigger than that.

[Wallach] Including security?

[Baraq] It is not so big when it comes to security, but this has nothing to do with Bibi. It reflects the grief the people feel upon seeing that in the transition from the Middle East of wars to the new Middle East, we are not stepping into a lit hall, closing the door behind us, and that's it. We are going through a long and dark corridor and getting beat up on all sides, but we are confident that on the other side we will find ourselves in a future of security, peace, and hope. People understand that running a country is a serious matter and that the Likud has not chosen an adequate, or even the most suitable candidate to do so. He is really very well suited to do other jobs, but not to run a country. People will choose Peres, simply because there is no comparison.

I would also like to say something about us. In fact, without noticing, perhaps because we did not start attacking Bibi as leader of the Likud sooner, we let him rise in the public consciousness as somebody who

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could aspire to run the country. This has nothing to do with a negative campaign. There have been reports in the press about disputes between myself and Hayim Ramon on the question of slandering Bibi. There is no need to slander him; there is no need to deal any blows below the belt. This is not even a comparative campaign, because no comparison is possible. We must simply draw people's attention to the fact that he is a good man. He is not a bad man, and he took advantage of the confusion to take over the Likud. He is a good opposition leader and ought to remain there, but he is not ripe or fit to run the country.

[Wallach] How do you explain the fact that the Likud is suddenly seen as a party with security experience, while Labor is trailing behind in this area?

[Baraq] You must bear in mind that two men who laid the foundations of Israel's security — the late Yitzhaq Rabin and Mordekhay Gur — passed away this year. I do not think the Likud is seen as more experienced in security matters. It has an old-timer clique driving a young boy. We know what this clique thinks of Bibi, because this has been written in black and white. I doubt they really appreciate Bibi. This clique has proved its ability to manipulate a very experienced and respectable man like Menahem Begin. It has proved its ability to fetter a man much stronger than Bibi, Yitzhaq Shamir.

What will happen, undoubtedly, is that everything Bibi says today will vanish into thin air. The guise of peace he has donned is only meant to meet the expectations of the people who, according to the polls, recognize that Labor in the past four years, under Rabin's government and under Peres in the last few months, has changed the political reality in the Middle East. People understand that, and Bibi sees it in the polls, and that is why he adopts positions that are alien to him. People will not buy his peace. In Labor meetings, colleagues ask me what to say on this or that issue, and I reply: Tell the truth. It will bring down Bibi's house of cards.

[Wallach] Are you apprehensive about a campaign that will highlight Netanyahu's young age as opposed to Peres' advanced age?

[Baraq] No. In my opinion, Peres' thinking embodies everything young people need: curiosity; intellectual inquisitiveness; a readiness to experiment, reexamine situations, and change one's perspective; and the total absence of dogmatism. Hayim Ramon said it best once. He said Bibi was a young man with an old mind. In his dealing with reality, the older Peres is one of the youngest men I know in our political arena.

Israel: Netanyahu on Hebron, Settlements, Clinton Intervention

TA0405125096 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0700 GMT 4 May 96

[Telephone interview with Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by Shlomi Stein; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Stein] You have said that you accept the Oslo Accords, but in a recent interview you spoke of the need to strengthen the Jewish settlement in Hebron and establish new settlements in the territories. How can the two things coexist?

[Netanyahu] What I said is that we accept the fact of the Oslo Accords — which are bad agreements in themselves. These agreements, however, were forced on us, and I do not plan to ignore the fact that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is in control of six cities now. I am also not ignoring the fact that a solution is called for, but not the one proposed by the government.

[Stein] Is your solution along the lines of beefing the Jewish settlement in Hebron and establishing more settlements?

[Netanyahu] I will not uproot the Jewish settlement from Hebron. My government will not be the one to uproot the most ancient Jewish community in the world.

[Stein] You have not spoken of uprooting but rather of bringing more Jewish settlers into Hebron.

[Netanyahu] What I said was that we should guarantee the continuity of the Jewish settlement in Hebron, because if you want to keep the Jews in Hebron you cannot leave them hanging by a thread.

[Stein] So what you are proposing is to bring several hundred more Jews into the heart of Hebron?

[Netanyahu] It is important to define this Jewish continuity from Tall al-Rumaythah through Bet Hadassah to Qiryat Arba' in order to make sure that the Jews living there — some 6,000 Jews, including 500 in Hebron itself — enjoy a continuity and a sufficiently broad security belt. This is how we will deal with the redeployment in the permanent arrangement stage. I believe that in the other areas of Hebron there can be an Arab-Palestinian civilian administration — that is, autonomy — just as I outlined four years ago in my book A Place Under The Sun.

[Stein] If you win the elections, will there be a new settlement drive in the territories?

[Netanyahu] Certainly, without a doubt. In those security and settlement areas which I outlined, most of which

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are in open and arid areas....[pauses] Did you recently fly over Judaea and Samaria, or have you visited the area recently? Well, let me tell you these areas are completely empty. There are four population centers along the mountain ridge, but most of the territory is completely empty. Why shouldn't we build settlements in the Jordan Valley or in the area between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea?

[Stein] Because the final stage talks are slated to start next week.

[Netanyahu] Have you read the text of the Oslo Accords? Well, let me update you. The Oslo Accords say that in the final arrangement talks each side may present completely new proposals.

[Stein] There is a difference between proposals and between creating new facts on the ground.

[Netanyahu] You just said something very important which I have been trying to explain to the public for some time. It is true that what is important is not what is written in the agreement but rather the facts on the ground.

[Stein] Turning to another issue: if elected, how will you able to work together with a U.S. President and a Moroccan king who made it clear in no uncertain terms that they prefer Shim'on Peres to you?

[Netanyahu] The U.S. President explained to me in several meetings — including his last meeting with me here — as well as in press announcements, that he will work with every Israeli Government elected.

[Stein] He is not hiding his fondness of Peres, though.

[Netanyahu] I believe we will get along just fine. In our talks, Clinton and myself speak the same language, we belong to the same age group and have an excellent rapport. You know that I am no stranger to the United States. Israel has very effective strongholds of support in the United States, disregarding the question of who will head it.

[Stein] What about you personally?

[Netanyahu] Referring to myself specifically as prime minister — let me tell you, Shlomi, that I am somewhat familiar with the United itates, as you know. I am very capable of soliciting very strong support for Israel there, as I have already done in more difficult circumstances.

[Stein] If you become prime minister, will Israel have any problems in its relations with Morocco?

[Netanyahu] No. But if I am prime minister, I will not do what King Hassan apparently wants me to do. I have no intention of appeasing the Moroccan king or any other leaders. I plan to be the prime minister of Israel.

[Stein] Is there something problematic with the fact that they have expressed their opinion regarding the outcome of the Israeli elections?

[Netanyahu] It is Mr. Peres who has a problem here, because we are seeing here that he is receiving support and in exchange is giving up assets.

Israel: Peres To Convene Inner Cabinet on Hebron Within 1 Week

TA0505110396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The prime minister will convene the inner cabinet within a week to decide on the evacuation of Hebron. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the prime minister's announcement came in response to Minister Yosi Sarid's charge that the prime minister could not conceivably decide alone on an issue that is both security-related and political.

Replying to Sarid's declaration that the government cannot surrender to settlers' threats, the prime minister said angrily that the decision had been made in profound deliberation and in consultation with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] generals and security officials. [passage omitted]

[A report by Yo'el Nir on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0905 GMT on 5 May adds: "Speaking at the cabinet meeting, the chief of staff assailed the statement of the UN officer in charge of the probe, who said the IDF deliberately targeted the UN compound in Qana. It is an outright lie, the chief of staff said."

[Reporting on 'Arafat's letter to Peres on the subject of the charter amendment, Nir adds that the "introduction to the Palestine National Council's resolution speaks of calling off the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, of peaceful coexistence, and of settling the conflict by reaching a comprehensive peace settlement.

["'Arafat writes in his letter to the prime minister: It is a historic decision; we are committed to the peace process. By the way, 'Arafat's letter was addressed to His Excellence Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Tel Aviv."

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 5 May carries a report by political correspondent Udi Segal which adds that "at today's cabinet session, Shin Bet Director 'Ami Ayalon warned about plans to carry out serious terrorist attacks in Israel over the coming days and weeks. The Shin Bet head said that Iran was initiating and urging radical Islamic groups to do their utmost to perpetrate as many terrorist attacks as possible prior to the 29 May elections in Israel, with the purpose of disrupting the peace process.

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["Prime Minister Shim'on Peres disclosed that there are warnings about the intention to carry out a terrorist attack on election day. 'Ayalon pointed out that Iran was directly involved in these plans, noting that hundreds of early warnings had been received about intentions to carry out a suicide attack."]

Israel: Peres Vows No Change in Status Quo in Hebron

TA0505122996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told the cabinet meeting that he will not permit the Hebron settlers to seize control of houses or build additions to existing structures. In response to a question by Minister Shulamit Aloni, Peres said: There will be no change in the status quo in Hebron.

Peres added that the Palestinians have so far requested permission only for the multinational force's entry into Hebron. He said that Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir will meet with the Palestinian Authority's [PA] Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] and that Major General 'Uzi Dayan will meet with another PA representative in order to coordinate the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Hebron.

Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon reported to the cabinet on warnings of planned terrorist attacks in Israel. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Ayalon did not go into details and did not mention the report in today's MA'ARIV that one or more terrorists are already located inside Israel. Knowledgeable ministers expressed doubts about the credibility of the report.

Israel: Peres Vows to Ultra-Orthodox Rabbis To Rethink Hebron Issue

TA0605105896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting between Shim'on Peres and a large group of rabbis from every stream of ultra-Orthodox Judaism has just ended at the prime minister's bureau. Emerging from the meeting, the rabbis said the prime minister promised to seriously reconsider the issue of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Hebron.

Rabbi Simha Hakohen Cook, the Rehovot rabbi, told our correspondent Gil Litman that the prime minister's voice rose during the meeting, but as a rule there was a relaxed and respectable atmosphere.

The rabbis came to the prime minister to ask him not to change the situation in Hebron, at least until the elections.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 6 May adds: "The prime minister said he saw no point in retaining control over the 160,000 Arabs of Hebron. Nevertheless, the IDF is doing all it can to guarantee the safety of the city's 415 Jewish settlers. Peres made these remarks in reply to a question posed to him during his meeting with ultra-Orthodox rabbis and spiritual leaders on why redeployment cannot be postponed for three months. Peres said that the three sites most important for the Jews will remain under Israeli control: united Jerusalem, Rachel's Tomb, and the Cave of the Patriarchs." Peres is further cited as saying that "in his opinion, redeployment enjoys a 100-percent support. To wit: Binyamin Netanyahu has announced that he accepts the Oslo Accords."]

Israel: Expansion of Settlement in Hebron Planned; Sarid Protests

TA0405125396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jewish settlers of Hebron are planning a settlement operation which will bring about 100 more Jews into the city. With this end in mind they have located approximately 10 buildings in the Jewish quarter and the casbah. Settler spokesman No'am Arnon told our correspondent Gil Litman these houses belonged to the old Jewish community in Hebron; one of them is registered on the name of Rabbi Yitzhaq Lipkin, the great grandfather of the present chief of staff. These buildings were abandoned during the 1929 terror incidents. In the framework of the preparations for the operation, the settlers are expanding Bet Romano and are adding an additional floor to it. The settlers claim they have coordinated their moves with senior right wing officials, mainly with Knesset Member Ari'el Sharon.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 4 May adds: "The Peace Now Movement has called on the government to halt the Hebron Jews' plan to occupy several more houses in the city. The Peace Now spokesman says that only the evacuation of the settlers from Hebron, rather than the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment alone, can effect a separation of the two rival sides and bring about real peace. The government decision to delay the evacuation is inviting acts of provocation by both sides.

["Minister Yosi Sarid says the entire government, rather than the prime minister alone, should decide on the redeployment in Hebron. Minister Sarid will therefore insist that a vote be held on the issue in the cabinet session tomorrow. Minister Sarid claims that the great majority of the ministers support an immediate IDF

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redeployment, adding that the position of the majority of ministers should decide the issue."]

Israel: Cabinet Communique 'Implies' Postponement of Hebron Move

TA0505065396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 5 May 96

[Report by Yo'el Nir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ironically, the Likud public relations office was the source of a poll published last night that showed that the majority of the public concurs with Shim'on Peres' decision to postpone the evacuation of Hebron until after the elections. According to the poll, 63 percent said the evacuation should be postponed, 19 percent were against any postponement, and?18 percent had no opinion. It is safe to assume that the findings of this poll will guide the ministers no less than their gut feeling during the cabinet debate this morning.

Following the prime minister's meeting with defense officials on 3 May, the prime minister's bureau issued a communique saying that Israel is committed to the decision on IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Hebron. According to the agreement, Israel will retain responsibility for the entire area inhabited by Jews in Hebron, the Cave of the Patriarchs compound, and the access roads to both. The communique further cites Peres as stating that there are no plans to evacuate the Jewish settlement of Hebron. Nevertheless, the phrasing of the communique implies that the Hebron redeployment has been postponed, although several steps will be taken toward that end. [passage omitted]

Israel: 'Small-Scale' Hebron Withdrawal 'May' Start Next Week

TA0605044596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The initial stage of the Hebron redeployment may take place next week, if Israeli and Palestinian officials finalize the details. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says the first phase will involve a small-scale military withdrawal from one of the Arab areas of the city.

The Civil Administration in Hebron have already transferred most of their offices to the Har Manoah base, and are ready to hand over full civilian control to the Palestinians at short notice. The Civil Administration have decided not to dismantle the television transmission antenna from the Hebron Civil Administration building so that Jewish settlers from the area can watch the election campaign ads.

Rabbis from Agudat Yisra'el's Council of Torah Sages want the redeployment of Hebron postponed. They will make their formal request today when they meet with Prime Minister Peres.

Israel: 5 'Terrorists' Said Waiting To Launch 'Massive' Attack

TA0505085596 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 5 May 96 p 5

[Report by Uri Arazi]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Shin Bet and the security forces are conducting a manhunt for five Palestinians who intend to carry out a suicide terror attack in Israel. Intelligence sources believe that the terrorists are already inside the Green Line boundaries waiting for the right time for a massive attack.

Four of the terrorists are from the Gaza area, and the fifth is from the Nabulus area. Their descriptions have been distributed to police stations in central Israel. They are: Ahmad Fu'ad, aged 22 from Rafah, is inside Israeli boundaries and is about to carry out a suicide attack — he had perpetrated security offenses; Fa'iz Darawshah, from the village of 'Awartah in the Nabulus District, was sent to carry out a suicide attack in the heart of Netanya; Hasan Mustafa Muhammad Shahwad, aged 19 from Khan Yunus; Samir 'Aliyan Salamah Nabahin, aged 24 from al-Burayj; and 'Ayyad Ibrahim Muhammad Tali', aged 24 from Rafah. They have recently infiltrated the Green Line boundaries. Clearly, they are planning to carry out a terror attack, but it is not certain that it will be a suicide attack.

Security in Netanya has been stepped up recently. Armed policemen and soldiers are securing central places in the city.

Speaking to reporters over the weekend, Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, said: "The defense establishment is doing everything it can to prevent attacks. We have always had warnings. This time, we are taking them more seriously than ever."

Israel: Shahal—Report on Suicide Bombers Wrong, Based on Old Information

TA0505144996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal has said that the MA'ARIV report claiming that suicide bombers have infiltrated into Israel is wrong. Minister Shahal told our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky that he investigated the report with Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon and was told that nobody knows its origin. He said that some of the details are very old and that some

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of the terrorists mentioned have been detained either by the Palestinian Authority or by Israel. Shahal also said that intelligence reports about planned terrorist attacks are received each morning and that the security forces have been on a high alert for a month.

Earlier, our correspondent said that Ayalon had told the cabinet about constant warnings of planned terrorist attacks, taking special note of the sensitive days prior to the general elections, but he did not mention the MA'ARIV report.

Meanwhile, according to the state prosecutor, the security forces have detained a terrorist who admitted he had intended to carry out a suicide attack in Israel and even wrote a letter in which he bade farewell to his friends and family. The state prosecutor was responding to an appeal by terrorist Ahmad al-Qawasimah against the conditions of his detention. Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports that in his letter, al-Qawasimah admitted to plans to carry out a suicide terrorist attack. The state prosecutor claims that following the wave of terrorist attacks that preceded al-Qawasimah's arrest and in view of the contents of the letter, there is a need to question him exhaustively in order to thwart future attacks, uncover accomplices, and seize war materiel.

Israel: Iran Reportedly Plans To Send Bombers Directly to Israel

TA0505175096 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iran is trying to send suicide bombers directly to Israel. Our police affairs correspondent Moshe Nussbaum has learned that the security services recently received information that the Iranians are training the terrorists and sending them out on missions in Israel but not via Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad. Among the terrorists are citizens of foreign states of Arab descent who are trying to enter Israel on forged papers.

Israel: 2 Palestinians Disappear, Feared Planning Suicide Attacks

TA0605082096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security services have asked Israel to locate two young men from the Hebron area who disappeared last weekend. It is feared they are planning to carry out suicide attacks.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the two are Majid Qasasiyah and Sa'adi al-Til from the village of al-Zahiriyah. The two were held in an Israeli prison for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]-affiliated activities last year.

Israel: Government Rejects UN Findings on Targeting UN in Qana

TA0505065196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has rejected initial UN findings that it deliberately targeted a UN camp in Qana in Lebanon. One hundred and two civilians were killed in the attack. Uri Dromi, director of the Government Press Office, said that Israel was not aiming at the camp. He said the army was firing near a UN base precisely where katyushas and mortars were fired. Dromi added that, unfortunately, two of the shells overshot and hit the civilians.

On Friday [3 May], diplomatic sources said that the incomplete report found that, in the absence of concrete evidence from Israel, the UN could come to no other conclusion than that Israel knew it was firing at the camp.

Israel: IDF Admits Mistakes at Qana, Says No Knowledge of Civilians

TA0505184796 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[Video report by military affairs correspondent Roni Daniyel]

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has admitted that a series of mistakes led to the tragic shelling of Qana in which over 100 civilians were killed during Operation Grapes of Wrath in south Lebanon.

The UN base in Qana was not marked correctly on the map, and its distance was inaccurately measured. The IDF is also sticking to the claim that it did not know about the presence of hundreds of civilians in the base. Our army affairs correspondent Roni Daniyel reports:

[Begin recording] [Daniyel] Five days after the investigation into the Qana shelling ended, the IDF has presented its findings. A UN investigation that hinted that those who gave the order to fire did so with the intention of killing is what brought Major General Matan Vilna'i, deputy chief of staff; Maj. Gen. 'Amiram Levin, commander of the Northern Command; and Brigadier General Dan Har'el, chief Artillery Corp officer who was appointed to investigate the incident, to convene a news conference to present the findings to the public.

[Vilna'i] Because of bad weather conditions, attack helicopters and aircraft could not be used. That is why it was decided to use the artillery.

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[Daniyel] The purpose of the shelling was to rescue an IDF unit that was under fire and in danger. Today, with the aid of photographs, the IDF explained the lack of knowledge about the presence of hundreds of civilians in the UN camp. A photograph of the camp taken two days before the shelling does not indicate the presence of hundreds of civilians there. The UN camp was also incorrectly marked on IDF maps, however, and the distance between the sources of fire and the camp was inaccurately measured.

[Har'el] What happened is that the measurements taken showed the spot which was 100 meters away — a significant difference in this case — to be 350 meters from where the base was believed to be.

[Daniyel] The sad outcome shocked the IDF top brass; however, the findings show the shelling was vital. The IDF's assessment of the situation and the order to shell were conducted according to proper procedures, while there was no way of knowing that many civilians were located inside the camp. The shelling was inaccurately directed as a result of mistakes on the map and incorrect measurements, but under the circumstances — the effort to rescue an IDF unit — this would not have changed the order to fire at Qana, according to the IDF findings. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Says National Unity Government Idea 'Interesting'

TA0605083396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Netanyahu says he did not plan to discuss the option of a unity government at this time, but he does not rule out the possibility that he may do so before the elections. Speaking to our correspondent this morning Netanyahu said the idea of a unity government is interesting. If the Likud forms the next government, it will first of all invite the national camp parties, he said.

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Jordan: Talks With EU Delegation Begin in Amman

JN0505191396 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 5 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between the Jordanian Government and European Union [EU] states began at the Prime Ministry a little while ago. The talks were led by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, who is the current president of the EU Council. Agnelli arrived in Amman today.

The two sides discussed the latest developments the peace process in the wake of recent events in the region and Europe's role in activating the peace process so that its positive results will be reflected in the region's standard of living and economy.

The European delegation's visit to Jordan is part of its clear assertion of Jordan's pivotal role in advancing the peace process, especially in light of Jordan's role in removing all obstacles to a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the region based on UN resolutions.

The talks, in which the industry and trade minister, the planning minister, the finance minister, and the information minister participated, also dealt with relations between Jordan and the EU states, especially the Jordanian-European partnership process and European economic support for Jordan at the bilateral and regional levels.

Jordan: EU's Agnelli on European Role in Region

JN0505203796 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 5 May 96

[Announcer-read report over video from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and the visiting European Union delegation, led by Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, held talks in Amman this evening. They focused on the latest developments in the region and the European role in activating the Middle East peace process. The talks also covered bilateral relations between the states of the European Union and Jordan, particularly Jordanian-European partnership agreement and the European economic support for Jordan.

The prime minister asserted the importance of the European role in making and building peace and affirmed Jordan's commitment to the Barcelona Declaration and work towards reaching a partnership agreement with Europe. Susanna Agnelli announced the agreement of the Council of European Ministers to give Jordan, as a grant, $130 million.

After the meeting, the Italian foreign minister told our reporter Iman al-'Ukur that it is time for Europe to assume a stronger role to achieve a durable peace in the region.

[Begin recording] [Agnelli] Well, we talked a lot about the peace process. We told him how much we appreciate the role that your king has had during this whole peace process and how we know that without Jordan at the beginning making peace with Israel, the whole of the rest of the peace process would have been impossible.

And, of course, we want to talk about the future of the peace process and how the European Union can help and how Jordan can help to make the peace really be a durable thing in the whole area, because we think that that is necessary.

[Al-'Ukur] In what aspect is the European stand towards the actual situation in the Middle East different from the American stand?

[Agnelli] Well, it is different. First of all, because we Europeans are Mediterraneans and all this region is a region of the Mediterranean. So, we think that they are closer to us and that there are many things about this region that we might understand better than the Americans, even. Of course, the Americans are Americans and very powerful, and they can come the whole of their power and try to make peace, which is a very good thing, and I hope that they will always manage to do it. But, I still think that we know the region better.

[Al-'Ukur] Your excellency, how do you think Europe can help in achieving a more balanced equation in the Middle East, taking into consideration the American stand, which is biased [words indistinct]?

[Agnelli] No, but I think that the American peace is a very good one. I think it is good if they manage to make it a durable peace. Up to now, it is really only a truce, and we think it should be peace.

[Al-'Ukur] But there is somehow a lack of balance, and this is what you mentioned maybe....

[Agnelli, interrupting] The lack of balance you see...[pauses] You mean to say that it is a lack of balance in the way that the Americans behave when they are talking about Israel or when they are talking about other countries. Well, of course, the Americans are very close to Israel, and Israel is very close to the Americans.

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[Al-'Ukur] And will you, the Europeans, help in achieving a better balance?

[Agnelli] Yes, we think that when something terrible happens, you have to consider all the countries the same. [end recording]

Jordan: Crown Prince Confers With EU Delegation Head

JN0505202996 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 5 May 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, received the European troika delegation led by Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli at Raghadan Palace today. Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the European troika in various fields. They also discussed a number of issues related to the progress of the negotiations between Jordan and the EU on a partnership agreement that serves the two sides' future interests.

The crown prince and the head of the troika delegation, in the presence of members of the two delegations, discussed Europe's future role in rebuilding the region's economies and achieving a distinguished level of development through European participation and investment in the region.

Jordan: Ambassador to Iraq To Return to Baghdad 'Soon'

JN0405195096 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 4 May 96

[Announcer-read report; from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The cabinet devoted its weekly meeting this evening to the discussion of a draft law to establish a Freedom, Democracy, and Human Rights Studies Center in accordance with a royal decree.

The cabinet will resume its discussion of the draft in its next meetings. Following the cabinet meeting, Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said no new licenses have been issued for Iraqi opposition groups to set up offices in Amman. He said Jordan had issued in the past a license to al-Wifaq [accord] Movement, noting that the government deals individually with any such requests.

Minister al-Mu'ashshir said Jordan's ambassador to Iraq will return soon to Baghdad after consultations with the government in Amman. The ambassador was called back to Amman for consultations following the killing of several Jordanian citizens in Iraq last month. The information minister said Iraq's ambassador to Jordan, who has also been on vacation in his country, will return back to Amman.

Jordan: Ambassador To Return to Baghdad 'Within 48 Hours'

JN0605100496 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 6 May 96 pp 1, 19

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Text] It became certain that Bassam Qaqish, Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad, will return to Iraq after the completion of consultations with the government. Qaqish was recalled by the government late April for consultation on some issues, including the recent killings of Jordanian citizens in Iraq.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, who met with Ambassador Qaqish twice since the latter's arrival in Amman, gave directives on some issues which the Jordanian diplomatic mission in Iraq should follow up with the Iraqi Government.

Ambassador Qaqish told AL-ASWAQ that he will return to Baghdad within the next 48 hours, after concluding consultations with the government. He said he hopes he will be able to fulfill his duties in the best manner.

Interior Minister 'Awad Khulayfat also conferred with Qaqish and discussed with him a number of issues pertaining to the safety of Jordanian citizens in Iraq and the Jordanian trucks traveling to Baghdad. Qaqish noted that his meeting with the interior minister included a discussion of the murder of some Jordanians in Iraq. It was decided that the Interior Ministry will conduct a detailed study of this issue. He said that in light of this study, certain measures will be taken to ensure security protection for the Jordanian trucks in coordination with the Iraqi Government. He added that these trucks might be ordered to travel in convoys during nighttime.

Qaqish said that after his return to Baghdad, he will follow up with the Iraqi Government the incidents in which Jordanians were killed and will request the latest information obtained by the security agencies in this regard.

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Jordan: Air Force Chief—U.S. Forces 'Will Not Stay' in Jordan

MM0405124496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 3 May 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Amman Stresses U.S. Forces Will Not Stay on Jordanian Territory"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Major General Muhammad Khayr al-'Ababinah, chief of staff of the Jordanian Royal Air Force, stressed yesterday that the sorties conducted by U.S. and Jordanian pilots since mid-April are being carried out over the eastern desert areas. He told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that they are not conducted near the Iraqi border, but some 80 km away from it. He stressed that U.S. forces will not stay in Jordan. [passage omitted]

In his statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Maj. Gen. al-'Ababinah said that what is happening now is not military maneuvers, but, rather, exercises aimed at training Jordanian pilots on F-16 and F-15 aircraft, which the Jordanian Force will receive next year.

He added: "The objective behind conducting the sorties is to assess the combat capability of this weapon, which will be used by the Jordanian Air Force."

He stressed that the personnel of the U.S air units do not exceed 1,100 officers and pilots. They are now based at the Martyr Muwaffaq al-Salti base in the al-Azraq area, which is situated some 230 km from the Iraqi border. These forces are tasked with training pilots to fly these aircraft, training technical staff, and preparing the infrastructure needed. He denied that the place is a permanent U.S. headquarters or base. He pointed out that warehouses and temporary shelters have been built and some ground radar equipment commissioned. The U.S. Army units are currently staying in tents and have not built any residential units at the base.

On the sorties conducted by U.S. pilots over Iraq, Maj. Gen. al- 'Ababinah reemphasized that the U.S. aircraft are conducting these sorties without the participation of any pilot from the Jordanian Air Force.

Asked about the current exercises, Maj. Gen. al-'Ababinah said that the current exercises are limited to two types of warplanes. But there is a training program between the Jordanian special forces and the U.S. forces which will begin in July. He pointed out that U.S. military officials make frequent visits to the training area in al-Azraq to acquaint themselves with the training operations and assure themselves about the U.S. Army units, and that the exercises have not resulted in any casualties so far, either among Jordanian or U.S. forces. [passage omitted]

Jordan: King To Make 'Official' Visit to France 7 May

JN0505112996 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 5 May 96 p 1

[Report by Nabil al-Ghazzawi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Answering a question posed by AL-DUSTUR, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that His Majesty King Husayn will pay an official visit to France on Tuesday [7 May]. During his two-day visit to Paris, his majesty will hold talks with French President Jacques Chirac on relations between the two friendly countries on all levels, Middle East developments, and the two countries' stand on these developments.

AL-DUSTUR learned that his majesty the king will pay similar visits to a number of European countries before his return home at the end of this week.

Jordan: Source—Syria To Accept Golan Concessions for Role in Iraq

TA0605092896 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 6 May 96 p 16

[Report by 'Omar Khalil in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Jordanian figure said yesterday that Syria cares more about winning Israeli and U.S. support for its attempt to assume a leading role in Iraq after Saddam Husayn is ousted than about the regional peace process. He explained that Syria will try to convince Washington and Jerusalem to let Damascus play a crucial role in Iraq's future. In return, it is willing to show flexibility in the peace accord with Israel.

The senior figure, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "Lebanon is 10 times more important to Syria than the Golan, and Iraq is 10 times more important than Lebanon. Syria can live without the Golan forever, but it cannot afford a situation in which Iraq falls under the influence of the United States or its regional allies," he said. "Syria considers its regional role in Lebanon and its potentially similar role in Iraq more important and beneficial than making peace with Israel or getting the Golan back."

Official sources reported that President Hafiz al-Asad appointed his deputy 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam head of the "Iraq Desk." The sources claimed that the fact that Khaddam was placed in charge of the Iraqi file is a clear sign that Syria wants to "repeat the Lebanon story in Iraq."

The Jordanian official said that Jordan warned Washington, Israel, Egypt, and the Persian Gulf countries about

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the Syrian intentions. He said that the Gulf states already fear the Syrian- Iraqi alliance, and expressed his concern that Israel's stand on Syria's role in Iraq will be determined by the fact that focusing on the peace process is an Israeli priority.

Over the past several months, Syria and Iraq have maintained low- level contacts. Jordanian sources say that Iraq offered Syria an oil field in return for border concessions in an attempt to win Syria's support against Jordan, which calls to overthrow the Iraqi regime.

Jordan: 40 Said Detained for Planning Terror; Syria Aware

TA0605091796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 6 May 96 p 8

[Report by 'Omar Khalil in Amman and Smadar Peri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian authorities have recently arrested 40 people suspected of planning terror attacks against Israeli tourists and senior Jordanian figures.

Yesterday, YEDI'OT AHARONOT learned that an attempt to assassinate Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti was frustrated last month. Al-Kabariti is known as an ardent supporter of peace with Israel and is responsible for the establishment of the "peace government" in Amman.

It was also learned that the people arrested had planned 36 attacks on tourists from "various countries," including Israel, mainly by planting bombs at tourist sites in Jordan.

Among those arrested are persons affiliated with radical Islamic and pro-Iraqi groups who wish to settle accounts with King Husayn and disturb domestic peace in his kingdom. Following the wave of arrests, security has been stepped up along the Jordanian borders with Iraq and Syria. The Jordanians are no longer afraid of issuing warnings about terrorist attempts to infiltrate from Syria and carry out terror attacks in revenge for Operation Grapes of Wrath.

Jordanian sources stressed that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad is aware of the planned wave of terror. "The Syrians wish to show that the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan cannot provide any country in the region with security and quiet," the Jordanians say.

Jordan: Syria Criticized for Seeking 'Major Role' in Iraq

MM0305120196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 May 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Jordan Warns That Syria Is Seeking a Role in Iraq in Return for a Treaty"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Jordanian political sources warned yesterday that Syria is seeking to guarantee for itself a major role in Iraq in return for signing a peace treaty with Israel.

The sources pointed out that Syria is trying to convince the United States and Israel that it is "the only party capable of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region and guaranteeing U.S. interests in it through a broader regional role."

The sources pointed out that Damascus, which succeeded in imposing its domination over Lebanon and forcing Washington and Tel Aviv to deal with it to settle the recent Israeli-Lebanese crisis, "is seeking to achieve a similar arrangement in Iraq."

The sources said that Iraq's future "is now one of Syria's most important priorities." Commenting on what the sources said, a high- ranking Jordanian official has said that Washington "will not allow Syria to play any role in Iraq outside its current regional views." The official said that Jordan "will not allow Syria to impair its regional role whether or not it signs a peace treaty with Israel."

The Jordanian official indicated that Egypt and the Gulf Arab states are opposed to a Syrian role in Iraq in view of Damascus' alliance with Tehran and the current Syrian role in Lebanon.

As is known, there has been coolness in Jordanian-Syrian relations since the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty was signed and since Jordan started to seek to influence Iraq's future.

The sources pointed out that Damascus "is trying to apply the method it used to penetrate and dominate Lebanon with a view to penetrating Iraq, which is threatened by splits and the specter of civil war."

King Husayn criticized Syria for its failure to defend Lebanon and its people despite the Syrian military deployment in Lebanon.

And the Jordanian Government criticized Syrian policy, accusing it of "double standards and hypocrisy" after Damascus criticized Jordan for its stand on the need to bring about a radical change in the Iraqi regime. Government sources have said that Syria, which attacked

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the Jordanian position on Iraq, "adopted a similar position when it convened an Iraqi opposition conference in Damascus recently."

Jordan: Paper Criticizes Israeli Decision To Delay Hebron Pullout

JN0405115196 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 4 May 96 pp 1, 20

[Editorial: "Peace Is More Important Than Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has declared its intention to delay withdrawal from occupied Hebron. Failure to abide by the date set by the agreement on self-rule expansion signed in Washington is not only a violation of this agreement, but also a big obstacle to any meaningful start to the final status negotiations, which are slated to begin in Taba tomorrow, Sunday [5 may].

This failure to abide by the agreement will obstruct any natural start to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and increases doubts about Tel Aviv's intentions regarding these negotiations, during which substantive issues must be addressed so as to put a final end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, whose roots and essence are the Palestine question.

Some are trying to link this retraction by the Peres government to the Israeli elections slated for late May and to Peres' desire not to appear to be jeopardizing the security of the Hebron settlers, using the pretext of the "security complex" again. However, delaying the withdrawal from Hebron until after the elections raises big question marks about such important issues as security, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and other issues that will be discussed in Taba tomorrow. If this is the case with the issue of withdrawal from Hebron, which was decided earlier and which is binding in accordance with the peace agreement, how then will Israel deal with the other issues to be negotiated?

Going back on withdrawal from Hebron on the set date is not in harmony with the peace process. Any delay in the withdrawal is a discouraging start to the difficult negotiations that are supposed to be serious and permeated with an atmosphere of confidence, credibility, and honest peace intentions.

During their meeting in Washington on 2 May, President Clinton asked Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat for a Palestinian commitment to facilitate the final status negotiations. In return, President Clinton should ask Israel to honor its agreed-upon obligations and to convince Peres and his government that postponing withdrawal from Hebron does not serve any election objectives. Withdrawal serves the peace process and the achievement of its true objectives, which are more important than all other considerations.

Jordan: Sources Angry Over Israeli Report on Delays in Services

TA0505152296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Business and government sources in Amman are furious over the Israeli report that the start of El Al flights and bus services between the two states is being held up because of security problems. The Jordanians stress that the reasons are technical-economic hitches, which they will overcome soon. The sources told our correspondent Yo'av Aviv that the Israeli reports damage Jordan's reputation as a state of law and order and could hurt the normalization process.

Jordan: 2 Iraqis To Be Deported for Seeking Asylum in Israel

JN0605094096 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 6 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] In an episode that may not be the first of its kind, the security organs the week before last apprehended two fraternal Iraqis immediately upon their departure from the Israeli Embassy in Amman.

The two Iraqi nationals, one of whom was an engineer at the Military Industrialization Organization and the other was an Iraqi Republican Guards cadre, underwent thorough interrogation to know from them the secrets they divulged to the enemy embassy's personnel as well as the reasons that prompted them to visit this embassy. The two Iraqi nationals admitted that they sought asylum in Israel.

Upon completion of the interrogation of the two Iraqis, Muhammad Sa'id 'Abbas al-Khazraji and Fa'iz Talib Ghalib al-'Alwan, they were handed over to the Amman Police Directorate for deportation to Iraq very soon.

A friend of the two Iraqis hurried to AL-MAJD, asking it to protest their deportation to Iraq, where they would face persecution. AL-MAJD, however, made it clear to this friend that it will never side with capitulators and defeatists who seek their own salvation in Israel.

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Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Leaves for Summit Talks With al-Asad in Damascus

NC0405084596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The information department of the general directorate of the presidential office has issued the following statement: President Ilyas al-Hirawi left for Damascus at 1030 [0730] today for summit talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad on the latest developments at the local, Arab, and international levels.

Lebanon: EU's Agnelli Arrives, Meets Buwayz

NC0605100996 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz and his Italian counterpart, Susanna Agnelli, met at the Foreign Ministry today. They discussed the current situation and the latest developments in the peace process. Also participating in the talks on the Lebanese side was a Foreign Ministry delegation led by Ambassador Zafir al-Hasan and, on the European side, the Irish and Spanish secretaries of state and the ambassadors of Spain, Italy, and Ireland.

In an arrival statement at Beirut Airport Agnelli said her visit is in line with completing consultations with Lebanese officials. She expressed the hope that the cease-fire will turn into a permanent peace.

Foreign Minister Buwayz, who received Agnelli at the airport, said the talks will cover the cease-fire and the peace process in the Middle East. Agnelli and her delegation will meet President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri at the B'abda Palace at noon today .

Lebanon: Al-Hariri—Attempts To Separate Lebanon, Syria Will Fail

NC0305161996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has stressed that Lebanon, thanks to political and logistic support from Syria and Lebanon's friends, succeeded in foiling the Israeli aggression. He noted Lebanon's solid position and said martyrs offered their blood and souls to preserve the homeland. He voiced hope that what happened would mark the end of Israeli aggression.

Al-Hariri said one of the objectives of Israel's recent war against Lebanon was to separate Lebanon from Syria. But this only resulted in strengthening relations between the two countries, he said. He pointed out that any attempt to separate Lebanon from Syria will fail. The prime minister was speaking during a meeting with the chairman of the Syrian medical mission. Health Minister Marwan Hamadah attended the meeting.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri—Israeli 'Aggression' Targeted Construction

NC0305195696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1924 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 May (MENA)—Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri reasserted that the recent Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon mainly targeted the process of reconstruction, in order to hinder the country's takeoff for the future. In an interview with the weekly AKHBAR AL-YAWM published on Saturday [4 May], al-Hariri said that Hizballah emerged intact and that its bases and centers were not hit. What happened confirms that Hizballah was not the target and that the Israelis basically wanted to strike at construction in Lebanon and its attempts at future economic advancement.

Al-Hariri praised Egypt's and President Mubarak's stance during the latest Lebanese crisis. He expressed his and Lebanon's appreciation for Egypt's Arab stance, President Husni Mubarak's constant efforts to end the crisis, the efforts made by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and the Egyptian people's sympathy. He also hailed the Arab stand, which he described as extremely positive as it sought to halt the aggression and prevent its recurrence. He noted in this respect the role played by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and French President Jacques Chirac, whom he described as a friend of Lebanon and the Arabs.

Lebanon: Buwayz Says Obstacles Block Formation of Monitoring Group

NC0505183796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has stated that Lebanon believes that the cease-fire monitoring committee must limit itself to monitoring and must not be used for political purposes. This is because we believe that the April 1996 agreement [between Lebanon and Israel] is a cease-fire agreement and not a permanent agreement.

Buwayz explained that obstacles are still blocking the formation of the committee, the biggest of which is the venue of the committee's meetings. We are not prepared to receive any Israeli representative on Lebanese territory.

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Lebanon: Radio—'Negative' Position on U.S. Ideas on Monitoring Group

NC0605065896 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0445 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It appears that the monitoring committee mentioned in the April understanding [between Lebanon and Israel] has itself become a problem requiring a new understanding. France and the United States differ over the committee. Complications are delaying the formation of the committee and intensive consultations between Beirut and Damascus are needed to solve the problems. Lebanon received American and French proposals on the committee's composition, modus operandi, and the venue of its headquarters.

AL-SAFIR cites sources familiar with the Lebanese-Syrian exchanges saying Damascus supports Beirut's cautious, reserved, indeed negative, position toward some of the ideas mentioned in the U.S. letter, especially that of making the monitoring committee an alternative body to the framework that is the peace negotiations [with Israel]. There are fears that the committee role as envisioned by the United States will make the situation in the south permanent. The sources stressed that Lebanon and Syria are working to present clear ideas determining the committee's mechanism and method of action on the basis that the committee's mission is limited to monitoring possible violations of the April understanding, nothing more.

The formation of the monitoring group was discussed at the Latakia summit between Presidents Ilyas al-Hirawi and Hafiz al-Asad. The summit showed escalation in the tension between Syria and the United States. The formation of the group will be at the center of new talks between Lebanon and Syria today. Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who is expected back from Saudi Arabia today, will, along with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, visit Damascus tonight to discuss with Syrian officials a joint concept regarding the monitoring committee's mission, jurisdiction, and method of action.

Lebanon: Nasrallah on Understanding, Arms Purchases Financing

NC0305153396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 3 May (MENA)—Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah stressed that Syria has not allowed a single weapon to pass through its territories to Hizballah's bases since its participation in the Madrid peace conference in 1990. He said that Hizballah's Islamic Resistance does not need any military support from Syria and that the party does not face any problem in financing and buying weapons and Katyusha rockets from abroad.

In a television interview broadcast today, Nasrallah refused to regard Iran as the main arms financier, noting that financing is made through the payment of a fifth of the surplus financial revenues of party members and supporters.

He said that Syria's participation as a guarantor in the new agreement of understanding that was announced on 26 April 1996 reflects its principled stand of protecting the resistance and its freedom of movement to confront the Israeli occupation inside the occupied Lebanese territories.

Nasrallah added: Despite Hizballah's opposition to the peace negotiations and their outcome, we are convinced that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will not conclude a peace agreement on Israel's terms and will continue to be concerned about the national rights of Lebanon and Syria. He said: Even if a settlement is concluded, Lebanon will continue to need Syria and Syria will need Lebanon.

Nasrallah revealed that 14 Hizballah members were martyred in the Israeli raids on houses and villages in the south and western al-Biqa' where more than 1,800 housing units were destroyed.

Nasrallah reiterated his assertion that Hizballah is committed to the implementation of the spirit and contents of the April 1996 understanding, that it will not shell Israeli civilians in northern Palestine, and will not use civilian areas to fire Katyusha rockets. He pointed out that this understanding does not include any restrictions on the freedom of the resistance to confront the occupation inside Lebanese territories.

Hizballah's secretary general went on to say that the resistance will continue and cannot be eliminated militarily and that the Israeli aggression failed to hit the resistance bases. He added that Israel's intelligence services failed in all their calculations, whether about the number of Katyusha rockets the resistance has, which they expected to be depleted within three days, or the sites in the south and western al-Biqa' that were raided by planes, or the exertion of pressure on the Lebanese public to stage anti-Hizballah demonstrations. He said that the Israeli raids, which lasted 16 days, failed to stop the firing of Katyushas.

Nasrallah warned that the Islamic Resistance will review the agreement of understanding and the commitment not to fire Katyushas if Israel violates its commitment not to shell civilians. He said: We have stopped the firing of Katyushas until further notice.

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Nasrallah revealed that Syria warned the United States against the escalation of the aggression following the three-day bombardment of Beirut and that the United States exerted pressure on Israel to stop this bombardment.

He said that the resistance has heavy weapons that it did not use. He renewed the party's willingness to coordinate with the government against the occupation and on the implementation of the agreement. He said: We are not a political, security, or military alternative to the state.

On the clashes between Hizballah and the Shiite Amal Movement, Nasrallah said that the party is eager to prevent any clashes and there is a red line agreed on to prevent friction. He accused some political forces of inciting and exaggerating these incidents.

Lebanon: Nasrallah on Turkish-Israeli Relations

TA0505100896 Istanbul Kanal-7 Television in Turkish 1800 GMT 4 May 96

[Interview with Hizballah military leader Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah by correspondents Islam Dogru and Sefer Turan in Lebanon; date not given — recorded, in Arabic with superimposed Turkish translation]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Dogru] Can you assess the military agreement Turkey signed with Israel?

[Nasrallah] Signing an agreement with Israel means supporting the occupation of Lebanon and the fact that it kicked hundreds of thousands of innocent people out of their homeland. It means becoming a partner in the crimes committed by this oppressor. In fact, Israel is a threat not only to the Arabs but to all the Muslims in the region. Israel's desires exceed the borders of the Middle East. It has desires over Turkish territory as well. It has calculations about Turkey's waters, money, and even its decisionmaking mechanism. The rulers of the regional countries must be careful about cooperating with Israel.

[Dogru] How do you assess the anti-Israel demonstrations held in Turkey?

[Nasrallah] We watched them on television. It was a reaction expected from the Muslim people of Turkey. There is very low morale in Turkey. I thank everyone who went out to the streets to support the Lebanese resistance and condemn Israel's disgusting massacres.

[Dogru] Certain newspapers in Turkey alleged that you are planning to assassinate Tansu Ciller. Are you aware of this allegation?

[Nasrallah] These allegations are definitely untrue. This is only one of the many unfounded allegations being spread around us. We are in Lebanon. Our target and front are known. We have our area of struggle. Our aim is to cleanse the Lebanese territory of Israeli occupation. We are fighting for our country. These allegations are made up by the Israeli secret service, the Mosad. They are made up in order to portray the Israeli attacks as legitimate, to change the agenda, and to slander Hizballah. We do not have a problem with Turkey or with innocent people.

Lebanon: Fadlallah Comments on Understanding, State Position

NC0405125796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has said that Lebanon is the lung via which the region exhales its problems. He thinks Lebanon gained world sympathy during the recent war, noting the unity the Lebanese showed for the first time in history.

In an interview with the "Saturday Salon" program, Fadlallah asked: If the state stops the resistance, does it have any other card with which to pressure Israel?

Fadlallah stressed that the resistance seeks no gains and collapses before no losses. When it comes to the cause of freedom, the resistance serves the Lebanese people, he said.

Fadlllah thinks the April understanding stressed, at the international level, protection for Lebanon's civilians and reiterated the resistance's right to defend itself. He pointed out that there are more positive than negative aspects to the understanding. He also pointed out that the success of the understanding depends on Israel, because the resistance is not interested in firing rockets at the occupied zone, for that is not is not part of its strategy.

Fadlallah said: We want to drive out an occupier. We should not make room for any other occupation. We want to drive out the military occupation, together with the economic and security occupation. He added: Therefore, there will be a war even after liberation, a war that represents resistance at the political, economic, and security levels.

Fadlallah affirmed that Hizballah might constitute a problem for world arrogance. However, it is a class of Lebanese class that resists, just like any other Lebanese class. Fadlallah said:

[Begin Fadlallah recording] I think this experience represents, for Lebanese policy, a new phase of history. The state has assumed a good position, although there were some reservations in its political statement.

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Why a state official should say to the world that Hizballah is a problem that cannot not be resolved this way [a reference to Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's 29 April news conference] is beyond me. Hizballah might be a problem as far as world arrogance is concerned. However, it is a Lebanese group with the same rights and obligations as every other Lebanese group. It is resisting just like all the other Lebanese. It is not proper for an official to talk about a resisting group as a problem, even if he wishes to attract the West. When Lebanon turns its back on one of its struggling teams, it loses the world's respect.

Moreover, saying that Israel is bombarding Lebanon rather than Hizballah implies that this official wants to say to the Israelis: We have no objection to your bombarding Hizballah. Bombard its positions and leaders, but never bombard a power plant or civilians. Bombard them, kill them and spare us this problem, because we disagree with them and cannot fight them, since fighting them means a civil war. Therefore, spare us a civil war — but strike at Hizballah only; do not strike at the general population, the march toward reconstruction, or our aspirations. [end recording]

Lebanon: Hizballah Official on New Missiles, 'Espionage'

JN0405154896 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The official in charge of the Lebanese Hizballah's information office in the Islamic capital, Tehran, disclosed that the recent Zionist aggression came in retaliation for unveiling by the Hizballah's security organ of a Zionist espionage network in Beirut and the south. Ahmad Qasir also said that the Islamic resistance in Beirut has advanced missiles and that the latest missile that landed in the Qiryat Shemona recently was a (Ktard) and not Katyusha. Colleague Ahmad al-'Ani sent us the following report:

[Begin al-'Ani recording] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Ahmad Qasir, representative of Lebanon's Hizballah in Tehran, denied that Hizballah had signed an accord with the usurper Zionist entity. He asserted that the party would not sign any accord with the Zionists under any circumstance.

In a statement at the Iraqi Islamic Cadres Society last night, Qasir said that Hizballah refused to sign even the conditions it had written to the mediators, who intervened to bring about the recent understanding.

Ahmad Qasir said that the recent sudden Zionist aggression on Lebanon took place because Hizballah's security organ unveiled the Zionist entity's agents, who had provided it with important information on Hizballah's military positions, political and social institutions, and residential areas.

He added that the Zionists were startled by the remarkable ability of the party's security organ to unveil the agents' movements. Qasir attributed the failure of the recent Zionist aggression to the party's quick precautionary measures and its change of all the positions which were unveiled. This, he said, made the Zionist warplanes bomb Beirut and other residential areas. He added that the objectives of the Zionist attack completely failed because Lebanon's official and popular institutions rallied around Hizballah and because the Zionist entity was forced to accept Hizballah's conditions. This was the first time the Zionist entity has accepted such tough conditions without being able to dictate anything on Lebanon.

In reply to a question by the (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic on the Likud's possible assumption of power, on how Hizballah will react to such a change, and on the expected effect of this on the course of the conflict, Ahmad Qasir said that those who have killed Arabs since 1948 are from the Labor Party, the members of which are now called the doves. He added: There is no difference to us between the Likud and Peres, and we are ready to cope with all possibilities.

Ahmad Qasir then attributed the victory Hizballah scored during the confrontation to the party's reliance on God and its obedience to the Islamic revolution leader, 'Ali Khamene'i. He said that the concepts Khamene'i stressed during his statements carried by the Lebanese media organs encouraged the official Lebanese institutions to recognize Hizballah's role in protecting Lebanon. [end recording]

Lebanon: Hizballah Leader Vows Revenge Against Israel

LD0505104496 London INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY in English 5 May 96 p 15

["Exclusive" article by Robert Fisk: "Hizballah Leader Vows To Take Revenge — Robert Fisk in Beirut Meets a Guerrilla Chief"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The car they took us in had smoked glass windows and a black curtain in front of the rear passenger seat to obscure the route. The driver backed into a garage whose door was closed before we were asked to leave the car. But I recognised the "Majlis es-Shura" — Hizballah's central council headquarters which the Israelis tried and failed to hit in Operation Grapes of Wrath.

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Across the street, the wreckage of an apartment block — destroyed by an Israeli helicopter missile — still hung over the pavement. And the turbanned bearded man who walked into the cold, over-air conditioned upstairs living room was unmistakable. Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, the leader of the world's most ruthless guerrilla army, was in triumphant mood.

Mr Nasrallah, who personally commanded military operations during the 16-day battle, revealed that he had sent dozens of suicide bombers to front line villages in anticipation of an Israeli ground offensive. When I asked him if the 60 or so young men of a so-called "martyrs' brigade" shown kissing a Koran on Hizballah's TV station during the war were real, he laughed.

"What do you think?" he asked. "Are we kidding? We called on these people after a few days because we assumed that after the heavy bombardments there would be an Israeli ground offensive. These men went to the front lines and they were ready — if the Israelis entered any village — to cause heavy casualties among the Israelis so they would be forced to retreat." Only 14 of his men had been killed in the Israeli onslaught, he said. As for himself, he looked forward to his own death so that he could live in "a world without (US President Bill) Clinton or (Israeli Prime Minister Shimon) Peres, with no atrocities, where no children are killed".

"We are going to retaliate against the Israeli armed forces in our occupied land and through the usual operations of the resistance," he said. "We are going to take revenge on the Israeli armed forces; they were responsible for killing our people in Qana and they occupy our land. I know very well that the Israelis are uneasy now." He said reports from New York on the UN investigation into the Qana massacre — in which up to 120 refugees were killed by Israeli artillery — "confirmed that it was a deliberate action".

It was Mr Clinton, he claimed, who personally decided that Israel should launch its offensive against Lebanon after the "antiterrorist" summit at Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March. And if we wanted to know Hizballah's views on America, Sayyid Nasrallah added, we could attend this week's commemoration service in Beirut's southern suburbs for the 14 "martyrs".

Sayyid Nasrallah appeared confident but tired during his 90 minute interview with me, repeatedly removing his heavy-framed spectacles and rubbing his eyes, insisting that he would welcome the "martyrdom" that Sayyid 'Abbas Musawi, his friend and predecessor as Hizballah leader, underwent in March 1992, when he and his family were killed by an Israeli helicopter-fired missile. Hizballah's retaliation against Israeli occupation troops for the Qana massacre of 18 April would fall within the terms of the truce agreement, he said. But he was uncertain if the ceasefire would be successful.

"It prohibits both sides from shelling civilians under any circumstances but we have heard that (Israeli Chief of Staff Amnon) Shahaq said that he would respond to Hizballah 'anywhere'. And I feel that the military people in Israel are not satisfied with this understanding and will not respect it. As for us, we are going to comply because it protects our civilians."

Even if Israeli artillery killed Lebanese civilians, the Hizballah was not permitted to retaliate with Katyushas into Israel, he said: the incident would be referred to the ceasefire committee for investigation. But what, we asked, if Hizballah attacked an Israeli occupation patrol and the guerrillas returned to their wives and children? Couldn't Israel attack them at home?

"Under the agreement, the Israelis are prohibited from doing this," he replied. "That's why I say it's difficult for the Israelis to comply with the agreement. Because the people fighting are Lebanese. When they come back from an attack, they will not go to military bases and barracks like the Palestinians did [in Lebanon]. They will go back to their homes."

Nasrallah said that he had expected Israel to launch an offensive between the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and the 29 May Israeli elections. "I know those people very well and I know their capabilities very well. That's why on the first day of the aggression, I stated publicly to Peres that he could not stop the Katyushas through military actions. After 16 days, (Ehud) Baraq (the Israeli foreign minister) and Shahaq stood up and said: 'You cannot solve this problem of Hizballah militarily.' That's why this war was a failure (for Israel)"

It was this theme of failure which animated Nasrallah most. "Israel's basic goal was to destroy the infrastructure of the resistance and to destroy the will of the resistance, to kill as many fighters and leaders as possible... By killing civilians, the Israelis wanted to terrorise civilians so that they would demonstrate on the streets to demand the disarming of Hizballah. They wanted a clash between the resistance and the government in Lebanon. And when they bombarded installations like the electricity station, they wanted to exert more pressure on the government.

"They wanted to... stir up the internal situation so that (US Secretary of State) Warren Christopher could come and say: 'If you want a solution, let Israel and Lebanon sit at the negotiating table.' So (Lebanon) would have sat humiliated, weak and sad at the table and given Israel everything it wanted. Secondly, Syria would be isolated and lose all its strong cards. Had Peres been able to

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achieve any of these goals, he would have won votes in the elections. Neither of these goals were achieved. The failure of our enemy is our victory... Had it not been for the massacre of women and children we would have had the right to rejoice over our victory. But because of them, we have to say this is a sad victory."

Israel, Sayyid Nasrallah said, had wanted to "reinforce the label that Hizballah are terrorists". The guerrilla leader did not mention the 1985-90 kidnapping of western hostages in Lebanon by Hizballah's satellite groups, but he claimed, with reason, that Lebanon had not experienced such national unity in 30 years. "The resistance," he said, "is now more popular than ever."

Lebanon: Israeli Military Aircraft Violate Airspace

NC0505183296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1800 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli military aircraft carried out reconnaissance flights over southern Lebanon and the western al-Biqa' this afternoon.

Security sources said this is the third violation of Lebanese airspace by Israeli military aircraft since the understanding on a cease-fire [on 26 April].

Israeli artillery shelled several areas in southern Lebanon last night.

Lebanon: Israelis Shell South, Overfly Beirut

NC0605093396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0921 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces this morning bombarded the areas of Sujud, al-Luwayzah, and the outskirts of Mlikh. At 1200 today Israeli military aircraft broke the sound barrier over south Lebanon and flew up to Beirut, where they broke the sound barrier at 1206.

Lebanon: 'Vigilant Lebanon' in South Africa Hands Memo to U.S., Israeli Embassies

NC0305180696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1645 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Johannesburg, 3 May (MENA)—A group calling itself "Vigilant Lebanon" [lubnan alyaqiz] today submitted a memorandum to the Israeli Embassy in South Africa, demanding immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, compensation for the victims of the recent aggression against south Lebanon, and the release of Lebanese and Palestinian detainees in Israeli detention camps. The group, which was formed approximately a week ago from several Islamic and civilian organizations in South Africa, called on Israel, particularly Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, to respect the sovereignty of neighboring countries.

The group, which includes the Muslim Youths Movement [harakat alshabab almuslim], the Islamic Unity Group [jama'at alwihdah alislamiyah], and the Women Organization For Peace [munazzamat almar'ah min ajl alsalam], which enjoy the support of the African National Congress, condemned the Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon. It wondered if Israel believes that it can do what it likes without anyone calling it to account. The group described the Israeli attacks on Lebanon as worse than all the practices of the former racist regime in South Africa.

The group submitted a similar memorandum to the U.S. Embassy, calling on President Bill Clinton to stop financial, military, and other forms of aid to Israel until it implements all UN resolutions on Lebanon.

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Syria: Al-Asad Receives Lebanese President al-Hirawi

JN0405124596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi at the Presidential Palace in al-Ladhiqiyah at 1145 today. Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' attended.

President Ilyas al-Hirawi arrived at the Martyr Basil al-Asad Airport in Humaymim, al-Ladhiqiyah, at 1100 today. He was received at the airport by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Syria: Further on al-Asad, al-Hirawi Meeting

JN0405183296 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 4 May 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

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President Ilyas al-Hirawi arrived at the Martyr Basil al-Asad Airport in Humaymim, al-Ladhiqiyah, at 1100 today. He was received at the airport by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

During their meeting, which continued over lunch hosted by President al-Asad, they comprehensively reviewed the Arab situation and the results of the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. Emphasis was placed on the need to continue coordination between the two fraternal countries to tackle the future stage. The two sides also analyzed the causes, motives, and objectives of the aggression, and discussed in detail the formation of the monitoring group, its working mechanism, its configuration, and tasks. Their viewpoints were identical on all issues.

His Excellency President Ilyas al-Hirawi said Lebanon greatly appreciates His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad's efforts during the aggression to bring about a cease fire, end the naval blockade on the Lebanese coasts, return the displaced people, and protect the Lebanese resistance to confront the Israeli aggression.

Syria: Press on 'Extremely Important' Syrian-Lebanese Summit

JN0505085396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 5 May 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BA'TH comments on yesterday's meeting between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi. The two presidents reviewed the Arab situation and the outcome of Israeli aggression against Lebanon. They also analyzed the causes, motives, and objectives of the aggression.

AL-BA'TH asserts that views were identical on all issues. Emphasis was placed on the importance of continuing coordination between the two fraternal countries to prepare for the next stage. The paper points out that the motives and objectives of the Israeli aggression are still unfolding. Through its savage aggression against Lebanon, Israel sought to achieve several objectives, primarily to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and weaken the position of the Lebanese authority by destroying important economic facilities and engulfing Lebanon in chaos.

AL-BA'TH adds: The Israeli aggression did not achieve any of its objectives. It only killed hundreds of innocent people and destroyed some economic facilities. In fact, Israeli newspapers said the aggression backfired on the Shim'on Peres government. This is because Lebanon's national unity has been consolidated and the national resistance has emerged stronger. In addition, Syrian-Lebanese relations are now more special, especially since the Lebanese citizens felt once again that Syria, particularly President Hafiz al-Asad, wants Lebanon to emerge from its ordeal stronger and more capable of facing future challenges.

AL-BA'TH concludes: It is high time Israel, and others, realized that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks go hand in hand. They shall remain so. The enemies of Syria and Lebanon must understand that all attempts to undermine coordination between Beirut and Damascus will fail.

Under the headline "Shared Position, Destiny," AL-THAWRAH asserts in its commentary today that consultation between Syria and Lebanon has not stopped since the two countries decided to embody the facts of history and geography in a pan-Arab action. This action is a refined model of pan-Arab solidarity and coordination among Arab brothers.

The newspaper adds: The meeting between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi was meant to hold high-level consultations and assert a unified position toward the challenges created by Israel's aggression

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and its destructive impact on Lebanon, Syria, and the peace process. The two presidents also met to take an appropriate stand to face all threats.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Consultation and coordination between Syria and Lebanon are an established fact through relentless efforts to promote relations toward the better in the interest of the one people in the two fraternal countries. This will bolster the unified position of the two countries on the peace process. Syria and Lebanon have proven that they are sincerely searching for a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees liberating occupied southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan, the return of rights, and freedom and dignity to the Arab nation. The Syrian-Lebanese position clearly adheres to the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. Israel, on the other hand, avoided the implementation of relevant international resolutions and resorted to maneuvers to escape the primary condition for peace, which is full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

The paper concludes: The Syrian-Lebanese summit is extremely important at this stage. This is because the cease-fire understanding is a temporary truce, not a permanent solution. Israel has grown accustomed to intransigence and to a spirit of extremism and aggression. Israel has so far refused to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy. This requires coordination, consultation, and unifying views so as to deny Israel any chance to make gains through its aggression.

Syria: TISHRIN—Country Not 'Concerned' With U.S. Terrorism Report

JN0405145096 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0850 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 4 May (SANA)—The newspaper TISHRIN says that the annual terrorism report released by the U.S. State Department, in which Syria and other Arab and Islamic states were deemed states sponsoring terrorism, provides nothing new. It includes a repeat of old ideas and postulates that should have become a thing of the past by now.

In a political analysis published today, the paper adds that the fabricated incidents and flagrant allegations in the report are not worthy of a reply because Damascus has become used to hearing such allegations.

The paper wonders: How can the United States reconcile between the role of an honest broker and a full partner in the Middle East peace process and the fabrication of lies? How can the United States accept these lies to appease Israel, which practices state terrorism and plays a game of fire in southern Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip?

TISHRIN adds: Even those who drafted this report were unable to answer this question. For the report states that the United States does not have a single shred of evidence of Syrian involvement in the planning or implementation of terrorist attacks since 1986, when the U.S. State Department began to release such reports. Moreover, Damascus continues to engage in serious negotiations with the Israelis to achieve a peace agreement with them.

The paper goes on to say: Syria has never been concerned and will never be concerned with the inclusion of its name in such reports. It will not accord them the slightest attention, because they are utterly baseless. They are a repeat of allegations promoted by Israel to undermine Syria's steadfastness. Americans, before others, know that there are political motives behind the paragraphs on Syria in the report.

The paper says: What is really saddening is the timing of the U.S. report. The report was released less than a week after the perpetration of the Qana massacre. The blood of the southern Lebanese children is still wet, and the Israeli crime against unarmed civilians is still vivid in the memory of the world community. As for the U.S. partner, it has not even bothered to denounce or condemn this dastardly crime, which the world community branded as criminal and terrorist.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: And here the real intentions are laid bare and the U.S. scale of justice, which is grounded in double standards, becomes obvious to all. The United States uses double standards when the issue in question concerns the Arab region.

Syria: Christopher Statements 'Not in Line' With Previous Ones

JN0505132296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 5 May 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: During his several tours of the region since he assumed his post in the U.S. Administration — especially his visits to Damascus — Secretary of State Warren Christopher has reiterated that Syria is crucial to reaching a just and comprehensive peace, that there will be no peace without Syria, and that President Hafiz al-Asad is spending a great deal of time and energy toward realizing progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks within the framework of international legitimacy and the resolutions of the international community.

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U.S. President Bill Clinton's statements on the Middle East peace process have also included the same ideas since he reached firm conclusions based on the results of the two Syrian-U.S. summits in Geneva and Damascus and the results of Christopher's tours of the region.

Even statements by the extremist Israeli right-wing Likud or the leftist Labor Party were unable to ignore that Syria is serious about realizing a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the international resolutions and the U.S. initiative that paved the way for the Madrid peace conference more than four years ago, in spite of the limited results that have been realized in some areas and the failure to realize results in others.

This is something we do not want to discuss right now. All the visits by Christopher to and from Damascus were successful. As he has said repeatedly, these visits achieved substantial progress in a serious and responsible atmosphere. During his latest tour, he realized — through his efforts and the efforts of the foreign ministers of the countries concerned — the required objective, as represented by the agreement that halted the firing in Lebanon and ended the Israeli aggression. This would not have happened without the serious and pivotal role played by Syria, whose position responds to the Syrian convictions about maintaining security and signs of peace in the region.

As for Christopher's recent statements, if the media reports are true, they are not in line with his previous statements and with the level of bilateral relations and the peace process as a whole. The present U.S. Administration, like the previous administration, has the necessary documents and firsthand information about the positions of all the parties. The administration is well aware that Syria is committed to every word it has said and position it has adopted. Syria does not bargain, is not a skillful maneuverer, and does not resort to conflicting positions or views.

As for Syria's fear and its doubts about Israel's positions, this is not only true, but also logical and is based on historical fact. We do not trust one who usurps the land and speaks about peace, and then signs a peace treaty here and launches war there before the ink of his signature is dried. This was what happened when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, after the peace agreement was signed with Egypt. This is what happened when the now-starving Palestinians were besieged after the Oslo peace accord. And the same applies to the latest aggression, which followed the signing of the Wadi al-'Arabah treaty.

Although the chain has not been broken and the blood of the victims of the Qana massacre has not dried, we emphasize our constant position that supports just and comprehensive peace.

Syria: Press—'New' U.S. Stand To Have 'Negative Effects' on Peace

JN0305122896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 3 May 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Wager on Peace," AL-THAWRAH says in a commentary: The recent Israeli aggression and the barbaric 16-day war against Lebanon raised many important questions on the substance of the new world order and the credibility of those who advocate it. This image came to light in a very distressing way during the aggression and through the U.S. and world attitude toward the Israeli military operations. These criminal operations went very far and reached the extent of insanity, mass murder, and the ugly mutilation of the bodies of children, whose torn-off limbs were scatted all over the bases of the UN troops in the south.

Furthermore, the U.S. sponsorship of the peace process and its role as a neutral mediator and fair broker are also being questioned. The United States' credibility was shaken under the impact of the internationally banned incendiary, fragmentation, vacuum, and cluster bombs, and as a result of the subsequent damage and the gruesome and horrible massacres in Qana, al-Nabatiyah, and other places. Washington was seen by the entire world as being biased in favor, and a supporter of aggression. It threatened to use the veto against any attempt to denounce it and to hold the Israeli ally responsible for these attacks and crimes and their consequences. Everybody agrees that such an attitude will have many negative effects on the stumbling peace process.

The paper says the region needs new facts to shatter the gloomy picture which was established by the Zionist crime in Lebanon. No one in the world can give a logical explanation for this crime or believe that those responsible are interested in peace or in taking tangible, practical measures to restore confidence to the peace process and restore faith in those who are involved in it, away from prejudice, favoritism, and adopting only the Israeli perspective.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: The interest of the United States, Russia, France, the EU, and the entire world is with the Arabs. They also have an interest in establishing the just and comprehensive peace which is based on implementing the pertinent UN Security Council resolutions and the total withdrawal of the

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Israeli occupation troops from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. Any other wager will lose.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: The renewal of the U.S.-Israeli strategic military alliance at this time in particular following the Israeli bloody aggression against Lebanon, and the United States' affirmation that this alliance will be advanced constantly and that it will supply Israel with further weapons and military and intelligence information and preserve its qualitative military edge over the Arabs, was received with much negative criticism in many parts of the world, especially from the peace-loving forces. This is because this new U.S. position will have negative effects on the peace process, which is already stumbling because of the obstructionist Israeli attitude, and especially since the United States is sponsoring this process.

The paper adds: Observers believe that this flagrant U.S. bias in favor of Israel is tantamount to a reward for its aggression and its defiance of the will of peace. Such an attitude means that the United States is an accomplice to these Israeli actions. Observers wonder how the United States can combine this flagrant bias, which in itself represents disdain for the Arabs and the world public opinion, with the role of the full and fair partner in the peace talks. Can the United States play the role of the arbitrator and the foe at the same time? There are several questions that can be asked in this regard.

The paper says: In view of this Israeli position, which is protected, militarily and politically, by an influential world power, the Arabs — who are fighting the battle for peace with sincerity and in a spirit of cooperation with the international legitimacy and the U.S. land-for-peace formula — should unite to face the new Israeli aggressiveness, which shed the blood of Arab children. Those who signed agreements with Israel should reconsider and renounce these agreements after it was confirmed that Israel is not interested in peace.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: The Arabs confirmed that peace is a strategic option and cooperated very positively with the peace efforts. They declared their firm commitment to the principles of just and comprehensive peace that is based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative, which Israel still rejects. The application of these principles will guarantee and protect Arab rights and provide security, stability, and equal rights to everyone in the region.

Syria: TISHRIN Cited on U.S. 'Generous Military Award' to Peres

JN0505073396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 5 May 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] TISHRIN writes about the visit to Washington by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres immediately after Israel's brutal aggression against Lebanese citizens — the aggression which drew world condemnation and denunciation. TISHRIN notes that Peres signed agreements that will allow Israel to obtain more means of destruction and killing which will only be used against defenseless people, as happened in Lebanon.

TISHRIN adds that world public opinion expected the Israeli prime minister to hear tough words in Washington in the wake of his aggression against Lebanon. However, instead of criticism and denunciation Peres received a generous military award which will encourage him to commit more military stupidities. Also, the visit took place while the blood of the victims of the Qana massacre, which moved world conscience, has not yet dried.

TISHRIN adds: The terrorist nature of the Israeli policy has revealed that Israel is the source of terrorism and violence and that it is the party which turned terrorism into a state policy carried out by government organs, such as the army and security. TISHRIN notes that the talks, during the Peres' visit, did not deal with ways to activate the peace process, but Peres exploited his presence there to strengthen the aggressive inclination in the Israeli policy.

Concluding its commentary, TISHRIN says: The results of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon should be an opportunity for Washington to ponder. Despite Israel's huge military capabilities, and despite the unlimited support extended to this aggression, Israel failed to achieve its objectives in Lebanon and only harvested disappointment and international denunciation.

Syria: U.S.-Israeli Accords 'Bias' Toward Israel Assailed

JN0305174896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1135 GMT 3 May 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres crowned his visit to the United States with the signing of a new series of security, intelligence, and technological agreements with the aim of bolstering bilateral cooperation between Israel and the United

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States on the one hand, and Shim'on Peres and President Bill Clinton on the other.

In accordance with these agreements — as well as the other countless agreements in various fields — the United States pledges to place the best of the advanced U.S. technology on the table of a greedy Israel that craves advanced equipment for detecting bombs and developing antimissile missiles and bullets that shoot down other bullets in the air, as well as weapons that would silence resistance and others that render people deaf and blind. This is in addition to luxurious U.S. equipment produced by military and security industries.

It is likely that the two parties — the Israeli and the U.S. — will meet again under different circumstances and new developments to discuss the futility and failure of the previous attempts to conquer the will of the resistance everywhere — inside and outside the occupied Arab lands. By then, the advanced U.S. industrial intellect may, or may not, have developed new weapons for Israel. Israel will test the field feasibility and effectiveness of these weapons through continuous aggressions against the Arabs.

In the midst of their joy, the two strategic allies forgot that the people's will cannot be subjugated by a machine or restrained by an invention. They also forgot that security and stability cannot be achieved by any agreement, regardless of what this agreement might be. Security and stability are achieved by just peace, the peace that was unanimously agreed upon by the nations and peoples of the world. This is the same peace initiated by the U.S. Administration when it once thought itself capable of playing the role of a fair partner and broker. The U.S. Administration failed in this role on more than one occasion. The most recent failures were supporting Peres in his aggression against the Lebanese people, ignoring the hideous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces, and the condemned stance on the Qana massacre, as well as all the agreements the U.S. Administration concluded with Israel targeting no one else but the Arabs now and in the future.

Despite the recent escalation in the blatant U.S. bias toward Israel — although the Arabs see, know, and realize the seriousness of this to the security and peace of the region, and although the electoral justifications of the two allies are not sufficient to justify such a bias — there is still a chance for the United States to play a real and unbiased role. This unbiased role would justify the previous U.S. stance, restore its balance—at least theoretically—and wipe out what is left in the memory of the Arab people who have followed developments closely and have not missed one detail.

If all this is done, the balance of the unbiased sponsor may be restored and the fair broker may stand on both feet instead of one, as is the case now. Bias toward Israel will not serve peace, even if it results in reelecting the administration. Peres' return, armed to the teeth, will not serve peace even if he returns as one of its hawks. History has proven to be the best teacher. The region has no choice but to bring forth a just and comprehensive peace from all aspects and by all standards.

Syria: Radio Warns of Growing Israeli 'Extremism'

JN0405171296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 4 May 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Every time it embarks on a new military adventure, Israel confirms that it is still distant from the logic of peace and lacks the spirit of peace. It also confirms that it has not yet made a decisive decision to achieve peace which requires sincere intentions and taking practical steps on the ground by dealing positively with the peace efforts, in accordance with its principles and requirements, and the fulfillment of its prerequisites.

There is not a single observer in the region or the world who is unaware of the fact that Israel resorts to this kind of military adventure, which turned into massacres and crimes against civilians in southern Lebanon. Israel's actions are a result of its arrogance, which was reinforced by the circumstances brought about by world and regional developments and the overall Arab situation. Israel thinks it can ignore the facts of peace and avoid the Arabs' rights and aspirations to achieve a future free from hegemony, occupation, and aggression, which has always been associated with the Israeli plans of expansion.

The recent aggression, which revealed the ugly face of Israel, is a clear evidence that Israel is still hostage to bad gambles that will only lead to further tension and turmoil in a region that is already saturated with the factors of explosion and conflict as a result of a long history of Israeli aggressions.

Strangely, the Israeli officials — who are all professional in twisting facts and realities — acknowledge every now and then that it is impossible to maintain occupation and achieve peace at the same time. Does the election season in Israel and the United States mean that these officials can avoid this fact, listen only to the voice of aggressive instincts, and consider only the immediate objectives, which are governed by fanaticism that is required in the election bazaar.

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Therefore, and without considering the grave consequences, the Israeli officials, who truly deserve the title of murderers of children, women, and elderly people, embarked on an aggression, which brought them only failure. This is especially the case since the blood, murder, and destructive tendency they displayed placed them, and their accomplices in aggression and massacres, in an unenviable position. Apart from the human and material losses, the aggression only resulted in strengthening the steadfastness of the Lebanese people, enhancing their national unity, and underlining their determination to liberate the southern territory and to achieve just and comprehensive peace in full coordination with Syria through a pan-Arab position. This pan-Arab position is strengthened every day in accordance with the facts of history and geography and the requirements of solidarity to confront all challenges.

It is now clear that the understanding to achieve a cease-fire cannot be considered an alternative to the lasting and comprehensive solution that would defuse tension, eliminate the factors of explosion, and end the cycle of violence and counterviolence. Israel — which sticks to its illusions, tries to maintain its occupation of southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights, and plans to have the upper hand to impose hegemony on the Arab presence and the future of the entire nation — may push the region to explosion at any time under feeble excuses unless the cease-fire is used to activate the peace process toward the desired objectives. Doing so would remove the possible causes of a resumption of fighting and aggression which will exist until the Israeli occupation ends.

We do not forget that it was Israel which caused the collapse of the July 1993 understanding and embarked on aggression. Israel will undoubtedly cause the collapse of the new understanding when it feels that its desire is pushing it to stage aggression. This confirms the need to take action to achieve the just and comprehensive peace, which alone can place the region on the threshold of a new phase of stability and security.

If there is still a chance to rescue the peace process, which the Israeli aggression returned to a stage of suffocation, then prompt treatment must be given first to the U.S. role, which must be balanced and fair so that the United States can be a full partner in peace and not a supporter of aggression. Second, treatment must be given to the Israeli mentality, which must change to accept the requirements of peace and the resolutions of international legitimacy. This means, in reality, a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights. Otherwise, traveling the road of escalating extremism in Israel will have very serious effects on the peace process and the situation in the region and the world.

Syria: Press Urges Legal Action Against Israeli 'War Criminals'

JN0405090596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 4 May 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH comments on the failure of Israel's wager on the brutal Operation Grapes of Wrath against Lebanon. The paper says: At first glance, the blood shed by Peres, the children he tore to pieces, the mothers and families he displaced, and the Lebanese infrastructure he totally destroyed seem to be a voting asset. The recent polls showed Peres to be approximately five points ahead of his rival. Before the invasion he was two points ahead.

AL-THAWRAH ridicules Israel's way of thinking and its brutality. It wonders: Are these three points worth this bloodbath and the smell of blood that drew angry world reactions and effected a change in the international position?

AL-THAWRAH says that because military results are not always the sole yardstick of gains and losses, they do not necessarily decide the results of the political battle. The Israeli invasion was no exception. As evidenced in the agreement that was reached, the military results of this invasion were completely curbed by the political management of the battle. The agreement nullifies the most important declared and known objectives of the aggression. The bulk of the agreement serves the interests of Lebanon, the Arabs, and the national and pan-Arab cause jointly pursued by Syria and Lebanon against Israel.

AL-THAWRAH says: According to any interpretation, the agreement is a major gain for Lebanon and its sovereignty and right to liberate its territory. It is also a gain for the national Lebanese resistance and its right to legitimate self-defense and to defend the Lebanese territory. The agreement, therefore, consolidates the joint march of Syria and Lebanon and the one destiny linking the two sisterly countries. These initial results are the outcome of a political process ingeniously managed by President Hafiz al-Asad — this exceptional leader — with various international quarters interested in the region. Thus, through extremely meticulous and skillful political moves and careful calculations, for which this leader is known, Damascus was turned into a center of regional events. President al-Asad managed to influence others' policies and develop them into new stands toward the Arab cause and Lebanese problem

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contrary to the old ones, which at best, were careless. Thus, Damascus became a key regional magnet and a political capital of hot events. Syria and Lebanon, and consequently the Arabs, emerged with an agreement of understanding in Lebanon. As much as it is a gain for Lebanon and Syria, this agreement is a gain for the entire Arab nation. This was certainly not part of the calculations of the invasion.

In its editorial today, TISHRIN says that Israel could not conceal its responsibility for the Qana massacre. The paper calls on the international community to consider the Israeli leaders war criminals and to take legal action against them. The paper says all evidence and facts expose the criminal who committed a premeditated crime in rancorous cold blood against the Lebanese who were displaced from their villages in the south and sought refuge from the indiscriminate Israeli shelling with the UN troops in Qana. The massacre was incomprehensible, but it was not outside the framework of the aggressive and brutal Israeli mentality which views killing, terrorism, displacement, and destruction as the basis of its existence, survival, and continued occupation.

TISHRIN adds: Major General Moshe Ya'alon, the head of the Israeli Military Intelligence Branch admits in the UN report that his men informed him of the presence of civilian refugees in the UN center in Qana and that the Israeli northern army command, which was running the operation in Lebanon, was informed of their presence.

TISHRIN stresses that this admission of committing the Qana massacre reveals that Israel could not conceal its responsibility for the crime behind pretexts such as imprecise aiming and inaccurate shooting. This is because the only target of Israel's savage 16-day aggression against Lebanon was the Lebanese people and their installations and buildings in a real war of extermination against people and property.

The paper says: In its crimes, Israel outdid the Nazis during World War II, breaking the laws of both war and peace and unhesitatingly violating all taboos in a disgraceful and cowardly manner. The inevitable fate of all those hostile, brutal Israeli practices was failure and defeat.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Now that Israel has been proven guilty of the Qana massacre, the United Nations, in light of the results of its investigation, should deem the Israeli leaders war criminals. The United Nations should take legal action against them, take them to account, and indict them for their brutality, crimes, and fascism, as happened with the war criminals in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only this will complement the results of the UN report and link them to the political responsibility of the United Nations in light of its tasks, objectives, and human aims.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Iranian Embassy Damaged by Rocket Attack

LD0405172596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, came under rocket attack again today. According to the Central News Unit, in the course of the attacks, the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kabul was also hit by a rocket. The embassy building sustained some damage. In the wake of this incident, our ambassador in Afghanistan condemned the continuing attacks on Kabul, which have resulted in the killing and wounding of the city's defenseless residents, and said: Fighting and war are not the solution to the crisis in Afghanistan. The leaders of the different groups must end the crisis in the country through talks and understanding. He once again declared the willingness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resume its efforts towards the attainment of national reconciliation and understanding between all the Afghan groups and leaders.

Afghanistan: Taleban Fires Rockets at Kabul; Goverment Planes Retaliate

LD0405190396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Overnight and today, the Taleban group once again fired rockets on Kabul City.

The Bakhtar Information Agency reported that the Taleban group today fired 14 rockets on residential areas of Kabul, killing one Kabul citizen and injuring another ten.

All of the rockets, which were fired from the south of the city, hit residential areas. One rocket hit the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a result of which three employees of this embassy were injured and a section of the embassy's building sustained damage.

Benazir Bhutto's Taleban have been firing rockets on residential areas for the last several weeks. During this period, hundreds of Kabul citizens were either killed or injured. After continuous firing of rockets by the Taleban group, this afternoon Air Force bombers raided targets in the south of Kabul. No report is as yet available on loss of life or material.

Afghanistan: Pakistani Party Leader Arrives for Talks With Rabbani

LD0405192796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Qazi Hussain Ahmad, leader of the Jam'iyat-e Eslami of Pakistan [Pakistan Islamic Assembly] and member of that country's Senate, visited Afghanistan for the second time last week.

According to an IRNA report from Kabul, the Jam'iyat-e Eslami leader, who has been trying to improve relations between the government of Afghanistan and some other opposition groups, met and spoke with Golboddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], soon after his arrival in Jalalabad.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad is due to hold talks in Kabul with President of Afghanistan Borhanoddin Rabbani.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad is also trying to improve relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which have deteriorated during the past few months.

Last week, the leader of the Jam'iyat-e Eslami of Pakistan met and held talks in Kabul with Borhanoddin Rabbani.

Afghanistan: Opposition Groups To Establish Team for Government Talks

LD0405201396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The coalition of four opposition parties to the government of Afghanistan, the High Coordination Council, is planning to set up a team to hold direct talks with the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani.

This decision was made yesterday at a meeting of the High Coordination Council, convened under the chairmanship of Sebghatollah Mojaddedi.

In this connection, may we draw your attention to the following report sent by our colleague in Islamabad:

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] The coalition of opposition parties to the Afghan Government has agreed to begin direct talks with the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani. This decision was made yesterday at a session of the High Coordination Council. The session was convened in Peshawar City under the chairmanship of Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, chairman of the coalition. Reports say that the High Coordination Council will set up a committee to hold talks with the leaders of the coalition — Golboddin Hekmatyar, 'Abdol Rashid Dostam and Karim Khalili, general secretary of the Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party]. After consultations, the

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committee will prepare an agenda which will be presented to Rabbani's government. Direct talks will be convened between the two sides if the government of President Rabbani gives a positive reply to the proposals.

Regarding the details of the council's decisions, when I contacted Mowlawi Abdol Baqi Turkistani, spokesman of the Jonbish-e Melli-ye Afghanistan [National Movement of Afghanistan] in Islamabad, he told me the following:

[Turkistani, in Pashto] The session was convened to consider Mr. Rabbani's invitation to the Coordination Council to hold talks. We decided to meet the leaders of the Coordination Council prior to talks with Rabbani, that is Mr. Hekmatyar, Mr. Dostam, Mr. Khalili, and Mr. Mojaddedi. We then prepared a program and an agenda for talks, to be handed over to Rabbani. If he accepts this program, the talks will begin.

[Correspondent] Turkistani added that the Afghan Government invited the Coordination Council to talks. Afghan sources say that the Coordination Council's decision is a moral (? boost) to the current talks between the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] and the Afghan Government.

Meanwhile, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, leader of the Jam'iyat-e Eslami of Pakistan, has arrived in Kabul to mediate between the Afghan government and the Hezb-e Eslami. Before his departure for Kabul, Qazi Hussain Ahmad held talks in Jalalabad with Golboddin Hekmatyar, Yunis Khales, Abdorrab Rasul Sayyaf, and other Afghan leaders.

The leader of the Jam'iyat-e Eslami of Pakistan invited Afghan leaders to unite to find a peaceful solution to the Afghan problem. He asked them to end the continued fighting in Afghanistan and for all leaders to agree to the formation of a provisional government.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad will meet Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and other Afghan leaders in Kabul.

The leader of the Jam'iyat-e Eslami of Pakistan is trying to send a group of Pakistan's religious leaders to Kandahar to meet the Taleban and to obtain their agreement to talks with the Kabul government and other Afghan leaders. [end recording]

Afghanistan: Mojaddedi Says Council To Meet With Government

LD0505194796 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The High Coordination Council [HCC] decided during a meeting in Peshawar held under the chairmanship of Hazrat Sebghatollah Mojaddedi the day before yesterday that the council will hold talks with the Kabul administration. According to news agencies in Peshawar, the HCC has accepted Ustad [Borhanoddin] Rabbani's talks proposal after a meeting in Peshawar. According to a report by HCC sources, the HCC will prepare their plan prior to talks and after consultation between member parties, who will start talks with the Kabul administration after agreeing among themselves on an agenda for the negotiations. Mullah 'Abdol Baqi Turkistani, the representative of the Jonbish-e Melli [National Movement] in Pakistan, who attended the meeting, said: The setting up of an interim government for six or 12 months may well provide a basis for talks.

Afghanistan: Pakistan Senator's Visit; Rabbani, Hekmatyar Accord Rumored

LD0505101196 Tehran IRNA in English 0835 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, May 5, IRNA — Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad, chief of a religio-political party Jam'iyat-e Eslami Pakistan held talks with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and his military strongman, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, in Kabul on Saturday [4 May].

The meeting was in a bid to pave the way for holding of a broad-based Afghan meet inside Afghanistan, Afghan sources said here Sunday.

The meeting was followed by conflicting reports that a formal agreement has been reached between the Afghan Government and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan (HIA) through the efforts of the Pakistani leader who has been shuttling between them for the last 10 days, the sources added.

Hezb-e Eslami leader in Peshawar reportedly, did not refute the possibility of an agreement between the two Afghan groups.

According to a report, a Taliban spokesman in Peshawar, in a statement Saturday, accused Hekmatyar of forging an alliance with the Rabbani government against the Taliban.

He also claimed that the HIA forces had entered Kabul and joint forces of Rabbani and Hekmatyar were

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preparing for a massive attack on the student militia, reported daily, THE MUSLIM.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad in his separate meetings with Rabbani and Mas'ud briefed them on his meetings with Hekmatyar and other Afghan leaders in Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan.

He reportedly proposed that a joint meeting of all Afghan leaders was inevitable for a national consensus on the long-standing Afghanistan issue.

Afghanistan: Rabbani Chairs High State Council Session

LD0505173796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The High State Council today held a session under the chairmanship of the esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, the president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The secretariat of the High State Council reported to us that during the session the current situation and the complete restoration of peace in the country, as well as overcoming economic problems in the country, were taken into consideration. During today's session the esteemed Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, the acting prime minister, presented a report on the achievements and work of the commission on assessing the economic situation of the country. Participants at the session spoke about the exchange of views. To overcome economic problems, the High State Council instructed the commission to closely assess the current situation, and to present their proposals for implementation to the High State Council.

During the session, talks were held on the improvement and development of agriculture across the country. The High State Council noted that the agricultural activities and development in view of this year's good climate are in line with [passage indistinct] of the government. The related officials will help farmers with the [passage indistinct] of the harvest. During the session a series of other issues were also discussed.

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Aide Holds Talks With Rabbani

LD0505182896 Tehran IRNA in English 1740 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, May 5, IRNA — Afghan Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan] delegation, headed by Dr Ghayrat Bahir, a close aide of Golboddin Hekmatyar and his representative in Islamabad, visited Kabul and held talks with Afghan Government leaders including President Borhanoddin Rabbani, Afghan sources in Islamabad said.

The delegation comprised some key figures including military commanders of the faction. Afghan Islamic Party, led by Golboddin Hekmatyar has been in consultation with Afghan Government during the past several weeks in an attempt to resolve their differences.

According to Afghan source here "it was the visit of first high ranking Afghan Islamic Party delegation to Kabul, adding that the delegation members met President Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and other Afghan Government officials,".

Both sides resolved a number of issues and final agreement is expected in the near future, the source said.

The source also said that the chief of Jam'iyat-e Eslami Party of Pakistan, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, is on peace mission to Afghanistan to broker an agreement between Afghan Islamic Party and the Afghan Government.

Accoring to the source, Qazi Hussain Ahmad held several rounds of talks with Hekmatyar, Mawlawi Yunes Khalis, 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf, in Jalalabad and President Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in Kabul during his second visit to the war-torn country of Afghanistan.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Election Commissioner Repeats Call For Cooperation

BK0505164396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena has repeated his call to all political parties to extend their wholehearted cooperation to the Election Commission in holding the general election in a free and fair atmosphere. In an exclusive interview with BSS in Dhaka today, he said the political parties have a major role and responsibility in conducting free and fair elections to fulfill the people's expectations. Hena said the political parties will have to play their appropriate role at the leaders' and workers' levels to ensure free and fair elections.

The chief election commissioner referred to the measures taken so far by the government and the commission to ensure free and fair elections and said the situation is improving following these measures. He did advise taking more practical steps to maintain and create a conducive law and order situation. In this connection, the chief election commissioner identified two important steps that should be taken by political parties for holding free and fair elections. These are the adherence to the election code of conduct by all political parties and the government [as heard] declaration that they have

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no connection with terrorists and possessors of illegal arms. Hena said that it is very important for political parties to make such declarations.

Bangladesh: Editorial Urges Government To Recover Illegal Arms

BK0305162696 Dhaka THE MORNING SUN in English 26 Apr 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Arms and the Men"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The new Inspector-General of Police [IG] has turned all his gaze at ferreting out illegal arms, and rightly so. The nation should fervently hope that his promise just does not end up as simply something easier said than done.

Mr Azizul Huq has hit the nail on the head by emphasising that the arms recovery is a precondition for peace, tranquility and fair election. That is a down-to-earth assessment of what truly ails the society and polity.

One may then be apt to jump to the conclusion, innocuously in unfeigned spirit, that the solution to these ills that plague the nation the most horrendously now lies in clamping down on hide-outs of armed gangsters right away. True, there is an invincible logic in such exhortation, if one intends above board to call a spade a spade. The logic nonetheless turns vapid as the stress on arms recovery sounds just nice pep talk in an environment of open use of illegal weapons by goons who are set at large not infrequently under political clout. To rid the society of all illegal arms is, under the prevailing circumstances of upbeat gangsterism and administrative ambivalence, is by no means an easy task.

There is no denying that the IG's periscope gives the right view. The point, though, is how to torpedo the menacing bat of illegal arms which is not at all difficult to espy. The trajectory is riddled with many a bottleneck. The police are often scared out of taking any sweeping drive in nabbing criminals and recovering arms, not sure whether such action might earn displeasure of one or the other party that could well be in the running for the next government. That particularly when punishment was enacted in the past in the guise of administrative convenience for jobs done that were not approved by people at helm of affairs continues to haunt the meek police force. The missions are secret. Then are the criminals tipped off? Containing that surreptitious force is equally, if not more, important.

Who are the elements responsible for tipping off the gun runners continues to be an enigmatic question. An automatic theory is that this is the result of a shady understanding between the myrmidons of law and the fugitive criminals. It is therefore an added onus to the police to prove that such notion is baseless. Can the police take up such challenge?

The police also intone a plaintive tone that the Dhaka University campus, the infamous den of illegal arms, is a huge area which is not possible to cordon off during operation. Does the police admit arms recovery from campus is not possible? Should the police be reinforced with forces better equipped to take up the criminals on such an action of dire necessity?

The onus now falls on the caretaker government as to what appropriate measures are to be taken to contain, hopefully to weed out, the malaise. Mind it, this is the veritable government vested with the power to run the ship of the state in all respect, not merely to hold the coming general election. The chosen men of probity behind the steering wheel, free from political affiliations, must end this scourge, without fear or favour. On it will depend, among others, holding a free and fair election. Or else, this will make GBS [expansion unknown] turn in this grave. [sentence as published]

India

India: Western Hostages Reportedly Sighted by Army in Kashmir

BK0405092696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0442 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, May 4 (AFP) — Four Western hostages taken by Moslem guerrillas have been sighted in south Kashmir as their abduction entered the 11th month, Indian army and intelligence sources said Saturday [4 May].

The hostages are safe and unharmed and being moved from hideout to hideout by their abductors within a radius of 25 kilometres (15 miles) around the southern Kashmiri town of Anantnag, Brigadier P.P.S. Bhindra said.

Anantnag, reputed to be a Moslem militant bastion, is located 80 kilometres (48 miles) south of Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir.

"Our aim is to know the movement of the hostages and their kidnappers so that we keep our troops away from them to avoid direct confrontation for the safety of the Western hostages," said Bhindra.

The officer, who heads army operations in Kashmir, ruled out military action to rescue the hostages.

"Armed kidnappers, along with hostages, keep changing their hideouts," an intelligence source said. "They

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(hostages) were seen wearing Kashmiri woollens, sporting a beard and looking more Kashmiri than Caucasian."

Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Donald Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert were seized by the Al-Faran guerrilla group in early July along with Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro while trekking in the Kashmir Himalayas.

Ostro was beheaded in August by the kidnappers, who demanded the release of 15 jailed colleagues in return for their release. The Al-Faran is reputed to be a front for the Afghan-dominated Harkat ul-Ansar.

"The government has made it very clear and taken a firm decision not to accept any conditions of Al-Faran," said Bhindra, adding the governments of Britain, the United States and Germany backed the Indian stand.

"Four months ago, Al-Faran militants directly tried to contact the American and British embassies but they refused to talk to the militants and told them to contact Indian government representatives," he said.

US, British and German embassy officials have been camping in Kashmir since the kidnapping in July to help Indian authorities secure the hostages' release.

There has been no official contact with the abductors since November 26 when negotiations broke down.

Moslem rebels fighting for an end to Indian rule in Kashmir, the country's only Moslem-majority state, have kidnapped scores of Indians and about 10 foreigners since the separatist drive began in 1989.

The kidnapping of Wells, Mangan, Hutchings and Hasert is the longest abduction drama in the strife-torn state, where 12,000 people have died in violence related to the Moslem separatist drive in the past seven years.

Al-Faran had claimed the Indian army took three of the hostages after a firefight on December 4 near the south Kashmir town of Dabran in which a top separatist was killed. The Indian army has denied the claim.

India: 2 'Militants' Surrender, 57 Arrested in Kashmir

BK0405100196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, two Pak-trained militants of Hizbul Mujahideen surrendered before the state police at Kupwara along with arms and ammunition yesterday. An official spokesman said in Jammu that security forces apprehended 57 militants in the Kashmir Valley and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition during search operations.

India: Antielection Muslim 'Militants' Kill 3, Seize 11 in Kashmir

BK0405090396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0427 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] JAMMU, India, May 4 (AFP) — Moslem separatists opposed to Indian-sponsored elections gunned down three Hindus and abducted 11 others from a remote village in strife-torn Kashmir, officials said Saturday [4 May].

A group of gunmen raided the Sudhmahadev village some 130 kilometers (81 miles) from here late Friday, ordered the three victims out of their houses and opened fire after lining them up against a wall.

The militants kidnapped 11 other Hindu residents of the hamlet, in Udhampur district, and took away 14 .303 rifles belonging to the villagers that had been issued to them for protection against Moslem separatists.

The rebels set fire to 20 houses belonging to Hindus who form India's majority community but who are a minority in Kashmir.

An official spokesman said in this winter capital of Kashmir, India's only Moslem-majority state, that the three slain men were members of the local village "self-defence committee."

Before escaping, the militants pasted a poster on a wall threatening more killings if the predominantly Hindu villagers voted in Indian general elections being held in Kashmir for the first time since 1989.

"The killings and kidnappings were meant to frighten the locals from voting," the spokesman said. "It was clearly the work of (Moslem) militants who want to sabotage the election process."

No one claimed responsibility for the attack. But officials said it was carried out by either the Harkat ul-Ansar or Hizb ul-Mujahideen, which spearhead the bloody Moslem separatist drive raging in Kashmir since 1989.

The Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), which has substantial support in the Hindu regions of Kashmir, called for a strike in the area to protest the killings.

Moslem separatists fighting to end Indian rule in Kashmir have vowed to sabotage the staggered elections to fill the state's six seats in the federal parliament in New Delhi. The polls are due on May 7, 23 and 30.

India has vowed to hold the polls as a prelude to legislative elections in Kashmir, which has been governed directly by New Delhi since January 1990 after a local government quit at the height of Moslem militancy.

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More than 12,000 people have died in the Kashmiri separatist campaign. New Delhi accuses Islamabad of training and arming the militants. Pakistan denies the charge but gives diplomatic support to the campaign.

India: 'Strong Exception' Taken to Pakistan Envoy's Kashmir Remark

BK0405092396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A two-member team of the Election Commission headed by the election commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy, is visiting Jammu and Kashmir today to make on-the-spot assessment of the poll preparedness in the state. During the day-long visit, Mr. Krishnamurthy will have meetings with returning officers, administrative and security officials, representatives of political parties, and candidates in Ladakh and Jammu. The team will also have discussions with the state governor in Jammu. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi, a spokesman of the commission said that it has taken all possible steps to ensure free and fair poll in the state.

Meanwhile, the election commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy, on the eve of his visit to Jammu and Kashmir took strong exception to the remarks of the Pakistan high commissioner, Mr. Riaz Khokhar, on elections in the state. Talking to newspersons yesterday, he said Mr. Khokhar's remarks are undiplomatic, improper and condemnable.

The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has assured the people of the state that the coming Lok Sabha elections will be absolutely free and fair. Addressing people at Marwah and Gando in Doda District he appealed to them to turn up in large numbers to exercise their franchise without fear. The governor reviewed the security situation and the poll arrangements with local officials.

India: U.S., Delhi Position on CTB Discussed

BK0405123696 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 3 May 96 p 8

[Article by A.P. Venkateswaran: "Nuclear Test Ban: India Must Block Treaty"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A SOLID all-party consensus has emerged in India that the US-inspired Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) is against our national interest. Each of the three major national political groupings has articulated a defence policy course centred on opposition to the CTB and maintaining the integrity of India's nuclear option. No government emerging from the national elections will be willing to sign the CTB if and when the treaty is finalised in Geneva. This is widely recognised by Western governments and diplomats.

The main interest of the United States and its allies is to try and contain India's opposition to the CTB and deter it from scuttling the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, where the principle of consensus prevails. Unless India acquiesces, a consensus agreement on the nuclear test ban cannot materialise. To acquiesce, India will have to abandon what Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has label led as its "strong, principled stand" on the CTB and stop pressing its proposals at the Geneva talks.

The Western bloc is already working hard to woo India not to come in the way of the conclusion of a test ban. The exhortations to New Delhi are distinct: Stay out of the treaty if you wish but do not foil a consensus in Geneva. Alas, some of our own analysts are guilefully Uncle-Tomming such a course of action on the servile argument that we should not displease the great powers.

Should India wink at the conclusion of a nuclear test ban that is patently discriminatory, lopsided in its obligations and targeted at the nuclear-threshold states? There is little doubt that India will be the principal target of a CTB. Even if no government in India can sign a CTB unless it is truly comprehensive and devoid of loopholes, should the country allow a defective treaty to emerge whose effect over the years can only be to build international pressure on India by spitefully depicting it as a quasi-renegade state? It is self-evident that India's strategy should seek to directly serve its fundamental national security interests.

The West knows that if it can persuade India not to stand in the way of concluding a CTB, it would have won more than half of the battle. The next stage of the offensive would then be to squeeze India internationally and make it fall in line with the treaty's objectives, with or without it being a signatory. Once India is internationally sequestered and subjected to intense pressure, it would not be able to test even if it did not join a CTB. If India does not test, the main purpose of the CTB protagonists would be served since the treaty is intended to prevent the rise of new nuclear powers and preserve the existing security order.

At Geneva, India has set forth two main objectives in relation to the CTB: (i) It should comprehensively ban all forms of testing; and (ii) it should be part and parcel of a disarmament package anchored in a reason able time-frame. Neither of these objective is likely to be realised in the face of the unyielding opposition of the major powers and their allies. These nations insist on a treaty that will leave open major loopholes allowing various types of disguised testing in laboratories and

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underground. It is, therefore, no surprise that they oppose any move to shut down existing test sites, such as at Nevada and Lop Nor.

The scope of the treaty that the West is promoting through its obeisant member, Australia, is so feeble and ill-defined that a host of nuclear weapons-related developmental activities would be left uncovered. Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who was successfully browbeaten into breaking the cryogenic technology contract with India, has done another about face now and agreed to go along with the Western definition of the treaty's scope. No wonder US President Bill Clinton said on April 21 after the Moscow nuclear summit of the G-8 that, "We have all agreed to go with the so-called Australian language."

The G-8 and its cohorts also insist on a verification system for the test ban that would rely on their national technical means (NTM), thereby conferring unfair advantages to them. We had a taste of how NTM can be abused to serve blatant political purposes when the US administration alleged, through carefully orchestrated media reports last December, that its spy satellites had spotted Indian nuclear-test preparations at Pokaran. Now, the United States is defiantly threatening that unless information from national spy satellites is allowed to trigger on-site inspections in a suspect country, it may not agree to participate in a CTB.

India's reasonable requests that in the aftermath of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's indefinite extension and the consequent legitimisation of the nuclear-weapons monopoly of five states, the CTB should at least be moulded in a disarmament framework continue to be contemptuously dismissed. Ambassador Stephen Ledogar, the chief American negotiator at Geneva, categorically declared on April 24 that, "The United States will not sign a document... that has the effect of imposing or attempting to impose legally binding commitments to do nuclear weapons stockpile reductions." The world's unchallenged conventional military power is unwilling even to consider giving binding commitments on slashing its bulging nuclear arsenal, but it demands that India permanently accept nuclear and conventional asymmetrical relationships.

Having completed its nuclear testing programme after detonating 1,149 warheads over 45 years, the United States is ready to accept a CTB but only as a non-proliferation measure, "not a nuclear disarmament treaty" and "not a nuclear arms reduction effort", as admitted by Ledogar himself. Therefore, it is reluctant to expand on the vague, non-enforceable commitment to nuclear disarmament contained in Article VI of the NPT. As a US Government spokesman said in Geneva on April 9, "We don't want conflicting or additional or haphazard obligations to be drafted into this (CTB) treaty" beyond the reference contained in the NPT.

Against this background, what should India do? Its interests clearly require that it should not give up or soften its legitimate proposals on the CTB at Geneva. In addition to linking the test ban's entry into force to a "well-defined time framework" for total nuclear disarmament, the proposals tabled by India aim to plug the flagrant loopholes in the Western-initiated "rolling text". The West's intractable stand at the Geneva negotiations suggests that India should go beyond mere opposition to the US-contrived CTB. It must ensure that the major powers do not succeed in thrusting a fraudulent CTB down the throats of non-nuclear nations. India has to scupper the West's CTB plan by boldly and persistently pressing its proposals in the Geneva talks.

It makes no sense for India to permit a spurious CTB to be finalised and then be pursued as the prime target in spite of its staying out of the treaty. Even more self-defeating would be for India to allow such a CTB to be concluded, not become a signatory and yet not test. As the new government comes to terms with the imperatives of our hard-pressed nuclear option, it should, as an essential first step, block the conclusion in Geneva of a CTB agreement as proposed by the West. India has to show to the rest of the world that it has the will and the capacity to defend its vital interests. Without such a will, India cannot take the necessary technical and policy steps to translate its nuclear option into a self-evident strategic asset.

India: U.S. Criticized for Placing Delhi on Trade Watch List

BK0405124896 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 3 May 96 p 7

[Editorial: "Patently Wrong"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Trade Estimates Report has been brought out by the US Trade Representative (USTR). As in the last two years, India has been placed on the priority watch list under Special 301 provisions, for, violation of intellectual property rights. The priority watch list is weaker than the priority list, but is stronger than the watch list. Since India is not on the priority list, there is no question of immediate trade sanctions and all that is involved is bilateral pressure to change India's policies. The United States believes that it has a competitive edge in intellectual property and has therefore been pushing for better intellectual property rights (IPR) protection worldwide. Estimates on losses to US firms because of inadequate IPR protection in

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India are also available, although the data and methodology used to arrive at these figures are extremely suspect. For example, American firms are estimated to lose $450 million annually on account of patents and $120 million each year on account of copyright violations. Even if these figures are correct, they are peanuts compared to what is lost in a country like China.

What is the US grievance in IPR areas other than patents? The problem is only one of enforcement and this will be tightened up because of the Uruguay Round. Even on patents, India has accepted the WTO [World Trade Organization] obligations and the transition from product patents to process patents will take place by 2005, a period of transition allowed by the WTO. But from January 1, 1995, irrespective of changes in patent legislation, India has to have in place a system of accepting applications for product patents. These go into what is called a mail box and exclusive marketing rights are granted for a period of five years, assuming of course that the patent application is not granted or rejected during this period.

Four conditions have to be satisfied before exclusive marketing rights can be granted. First, there must be a pending product patent application. Second, there must be a product patent granted in some other member country of the WTO. Third, marketing approvals must have been obtained in that country. Fourth, marketing approvals must have been granted in India. India attempted to change the Indian Patents Act to incorporate these provisions. Initially this was done through an ordinance, but the proposed Bill was blocked by the Rajya Sabha [Upper House]. Nevertheless, product patent applications continue to be accepted. Thus, India has not violated any of the WTO provisions so far. It was understandable as long as the US complained in the Trade Estimates Report and placed India on a priority watch list. However, the Americans have now gone further. They have proposed that the issue be taken up by the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. Since India has not violated any of the WTO provisions, there is no case and the American argument is patently wrong.

There are of course non-violation provisions in the Uruguay Round agreement, applicable to policies that do not directly violate multilateral agreements, but indirectly violate their spirit. But even these cannot be invoked before five years are over. Before the WTO actually sets up panels to adjudicate disputes, bilateral consultations must be held between the two affected parties. Knowing that there is no case before the WTO, this must be what the United States is after an opportunity to exert bilateral pressure. This newspaper has always argued that there is a case for changing the IPR provisions quickly. However, it is equally important that American bluster must be met with more than plain reactive responses. To start with, there are any number of reasons why the Americans should be placed on India's priority watch lists, if only the government would produce such lists.

India: Report Views U.S. Move To Bring IPR Violations Case to WTO

BK0405124396 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 4 May 96 p 13

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The United States Trade Representative's (USTR) office notification to refer India to the WTO for its alleged violation of intellectual property rights (IPR) is only a thin end of the wedge to browbeat India into making its investment regime more liberal.

Trade economists, when contacted, said the US move is to make Indian labor laws and company laws more flexible so that the capital from developed countries would find outlet in democratically secure places like India.

Beneath the surface of a concern for a liberal investment regime in developing countries lies the overriding desire of advanced countries to enable their multinational corporations (MNCs) have a free regime for moving capital in constant quest of higher profits without hindrance by the host developing countries' laws and standards, they said. The director of the research and information system for nonaligned countries and a well known trade economist, Mr V.R. Panchamukhi, is of the view that alongside the sabre-rattling by the USTR, the move by the European Union (EU) pleading for a level playing field in India for capital mobility should not be lost sight of by Indian policy planners and trade negotiators. These countries which speak so volubly for capital mobility, do not show an iota of interest to address to the concern of labour surplus and labour exporting countries for labour mobility from the developing to the developed world as this might rub the domestic unemployed constituency the wrong way in the advanced countries, he said.

Some trade experts contend that though China is not a member of WTO, neither the United States nor any European country, including more recently France, thought it wise to insist on norms and standards these countries apply to other developing countries lest they should lose lucrative contracts from a vast and untapped market like China.

This "asymmetrical thinking" on the part of the advanced countries together with their reluctance to let

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labour mobility across borders only exposes the hypocritical attitudes of the developed world, experts contend.

Experts opine that before the enforcement of the Indian Patent Act, 1970, new drugs were manufactured in India only ten to fifteen years after their introduction in the world market. Since 1970, the Indian companies have been able to introduce new drugs by developing their own processes within a period of three to five years after their introduction anywhere in the world market.

Once the Indian Patent Act 1970 is amended and passed through Parliament after the new government is formed, it is widely feared that prices of drugs would revert to the pre-1970 level when prices of Indian medicines were the highest in the world because of product patent monopoly enjoyed by the manufacturers.

The experts said with the reintroduction of product patent for chemical substances, India will be pushed back into the pre-1970 situation when multinational corporations were enjoying their product monopoly in the country and prevented Indian enterprises from entering into local production.

The USTR reference to India as having failed to provide patent protection for pharmaceuticals or agricultural chemical products or establish exclusive marketing rights for patent holders in accordance with the trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) agreement for initiation of formal consultations under WTO dispute settlement procedures in Geneva should be viewed in this light, experts noted.

On Tuesday last, the acting US trade representative, had said that his country has placed India on its "priority watch list" and has decided to invoke the WTO settlement procedure with respect to its trade practices particularly in the areas of drugs and fertiliser patents.

Under the procedure, WTO will first ask the two countries to the dispute through mutual consultations.

If they fail to do so, it would set up a panel which will look into the complaint.

India: 'Disruption' Forces Repolling in 97 Booths in 3 States

BK0405132096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission has ordered repoll in over 500 polling stations in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh — 450 booths are in Bihar, 31 in Rajasthan, and 28 in Uttar Pradesh, while 22 others in Orissa, four in Tamil Nadu, and one in Pondicherry. Election for these repoll will take place tomorrow. Repoll has been ordered because of disruption during the second phase of Lok Sabha and assembly elections on Thursday [2 May].

Repolling was held in 97 polling booths in three states today. These include 57 in Andhra Pradesh, 31 in Rajasthan, and nine in Karnataka. In another 31 polling booths comprising 21 in Uttar Pradesh, five in West Bengal, and one in Madhya Pradesh, repolling will be held tomorrow. The election commissioner has ordered repolling in these booths where the poll process was disrupted during the second phase of Lok Sabha and assembly elections on Thursday. The commission has also ordered repolling on Monday in one booth in Yanam assembly segment of the Pondicherry parliamentary constituency both for the assembly seat and the Lok Sabha seat.

Meanwhile, with less than 24 hours left for the close of campaigning for the third phase of elections to 183 Lok Sabha and 154 West Bengal assembly seats, political leaders and candidates have stepped up their efforts to woo the 21-crore-strong electorate in 12 states.

India: Kashmir To Further Strengthen Security for Elections

BK0405161796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security in Jammu and Kashmir will be further strengthened to ensure that voters are able to exercise their franchise without any fear. This was stated by the election commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy, at Jammu today. Earlier, the election commissioner held detailed discussions with senior officers of the state, contesting candidates, and representatives of the political parties both at Jammu and Leh. He also met a deputation of migrants from Doda District who demanded that they should also be provided with the postal ballot facility on the pattern of migrants from Kashmir. Mr. Krishnamurthy accompanied by the deputy election commissioner, Mr. Vishwanathan, also called on the Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, and discussed the poll arrangement in the state.

Talking to our correspondent Alok Deshwal, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy said that the commission and the Jammu and Kashmir government have decided to formulate instant preventive measures to eliminate possibility of violence on the polling days. He said the recent remarks of the Pakistan high commissioner regarding elections in Jammu and Kashmir are encouragement to the antidemocratic forces who are out to disturb peace and stability in the state. He said reports have

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been received that Pakistan is determined to raise the level of violence and disrupt the election. The election commissioner expressed satisfaction over the poll and security arrangements in Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission spokesman said in New Delhi that special booths are being set up in Delhi and Jammu to enable more than 98,000 Kashmiri migrants to cast their vote for three parliamentary seats from the valley. He said separate notifications are being issued for migrants who left their homes from Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramula parliamentary constituencies after April 1989.

India: 'Rebel Leaders' Said Planning To Remove Rao as Party Leader

BK0405131196 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 4 May 96 p 1

[Report by Political Bureau]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Southern Congress rebel leaders have already taken the initiative to regroup Congressmen opposed to Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao to effect a change in the leadership in the post-election period.

Under the leadership of K Karunakaran and GK Moopanar, these leaders have started confabulations with Arjun Singh, Narain Dutt Tiwari, Sharad Pawar, Madhavrao Scindia, Kamal Nath and Vidya Charan Shukla to take steps to remove Rao from the presidentship of the party once the results are out.

Former Union minister P Chidambaram left for Gwalior to meet Scindia with a proposal to make Moopanar the new AICC [All India Congress Committee] chief and regroup all forces opposed to Rao.

Chidambaram was stated to be carrying an assurance from DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] chief M Karunanidhi that his party would support a combine led by the Congress minus Rao to form the next government.

Party officials said Chidambaram was due to visit Calcutta also for talks with Left leaders, including Jyoti Basu, to work out an arrangement under which the Congress rebels, supported by the Left, can stake claim to form the government.

Some regrouping has already taken place in the north with Arjun Singh and Kamal Nath campaigning for Scindia. They have been in touch with leaders from other regions, including Sharad Pawar.

Even Rao loyalists like Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijay Singh and VC Shukla have conveyed their unhappiness with Rao.

The southern rebel leaders are confident that their tally of MPs would be substantial to trigger a change in the Congress leadership and do not think the party will get more than 150 seats in Parliament, leaving Rao with no option but to quit. The challenge to Rao is coming from the south because the Congress is expected to send the maximum number of MPs from the region.

"We will have to take the initiative to effect the change since our number would be substantial," said a Moopanar Congress leader, confident that the party's alliance with the DMK will enable it to bag the majority of the Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu.

Karunakaran, who was instrumental in the installation of Rao as the Prime Minister last time, has turned against him. In the past few days, he has been talking to several rebel leaders and met Sonia Gandhi also. He has already openly stated that the leadership is open and it would be for the new MPs to decide the new leader.

Karunakaran's supporters say this time he himself is interested in the post, confident that the southern MPs will back him. He is also expecting Moopanar and the DMK to support him.

The developments have rattled the Prime Minister's camp which has asked loyalists to issue statements expressing support. Pranab Mukherjee, chairman of the AICC publicity committee, came out with a statement that there is no question of a change in the leadership. Minister of state for parliamentary affairs Matang Singh said: "Those talking of a split in the Congress after the elections are no longer in our party." He said such statements by Chidambaram, Scindia and some other leaders were baseless.

It is evident, however, that Narasimha Rao's Congress is disturbed by the possibility that the Left may back the rebel leaders against Rao to bring about a change.

Yesterday, Congress spokesmen V N Gadgil criticised the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] for its "waywardness" in dividing the secular votes in tandem with parties like the Janata Dal to the advantage of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. "The CPI(M) is like a violin which is kept on the left but played with the right hand" he said.

India: Congress Leaders Say Rao To Remain Party Chief

BK0405133396 Madras THE HINDU in English 4 May 96 p 1

[Report by "special correspondent"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao's camp today joined issue with the

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Union Industry Minister, Mr. K. Karunakaran, who had yesterday suggested that the issue of leadership in the party was wide open. 'Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao will be the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party [CPP] and will form the Government; neither proposition admits of any debate,' asserted Mr. Devendra Dwivedi, a general-secretary of the AICC [All India Congress Committee].

Another Rao loyalist, Mr. Bhajan Lal, Chief Minister of Haryana, is reported to have said in Chandigarh that the Congress would definitely form the next Government in New Delhi 'under the dynamic, mature and sagacious leadership of Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao.'

Though Mr. Dwivedi is one of the six general secretaries, he is deemed to be closest to the Prime Minister, both politically and intellectually. He had a meeting yesterday with Mr. Karunakaran and is believed to have discussed with him the post-election scenario. Talking to a few newsmen, Mr. Dwivedi insisted that 'Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao has emerged as the undisputed leader of the Congress Party and those who are expressing a contrary view will soon play a constructive role in his reelection as the leader of the CPP.'

Questioning Mr. Karunakaran's assertion that it would be up to the newly elected Congress MPs to decide the leadership issue, Mr. Dwivedi argued that 'those who get elected would have gone before the people under the leadership of Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao.' The AICC general secretary added that for the first time Congressmen are asking the voters to vote for them on basis of the achievements of the Narasimha Rao government. 'It will be very odd if immediately after asking for votes in the name of Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the newly elected Congressmen should suggest a new leader.'

Mr. Dwivedi also tried to down play the extent of Mr. Karunakaran's antagonism towards the Prime Minister. He pointed out that as a member of the Congress Working Committee, Mr. Karunakaran was a party to the disciplinary action against Mr. Arjun Singh. However, Mr. Dwivedi conceded that Mr. Karunakaran could have reason to be annoyed with the leadership as his advice was not always heeded. It is well-known that Mr. Karunakaran was not very enthusiastic about an alliance with Ms. Jayalalitha's AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] in Tamil Nadu; his advice that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi be invited to become a member of the Congress Working Committee was not acceptable to the leadership.

Mr. Narasimha Rao's senior aide also insisted that the Congress would not form a coalition government with any other party, in case the party should fall short of a comfortable majority. According to Mr. Dwivedi, it would be up to the others to support a Narasimha Rao-led government on 'merit'. 'Indian conditions do not permit a coalition government.'

Mr. Dwivedi also reiterated that the business of the leadership was a matter to be sorted out among the Congressmen. 'Those who are not members of the Congress Party will have no locus stand I and will have no role in the Congress scheme of things. Only Congressmen will be involved in decision-making.'

Nor was Mr. Dwivedi kind to those like Mr. Rajesh Pilot who have been demanding that the CWC [Congress Working Committee] should meet. 'Those who want to see their names in the newspapers keep demanding from time to time that the CWC should be convened.' he noted. Though he did concede that senior leaders would definitely meet, 'formally or informally', to decide on the modalities of the election of the leader of the next Congress Parliamentary Party.

On another front, the AICC spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, poured ridicule on the CPM [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] which had also publicly suggested that the Congress should change its leadership. Without directly referring to the CPM's suggestion, Mr. Gadgil observed that 'history of Communist Party is one of brilliant analysis followed by wrong conclusions.'

India: Prime Minister Discusses Elections at Meeting in Kashmir

BK0505130396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president of the Indian National Congress, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, has said that he does not rule out any more mischief by Pakistan to thwart the polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking at a meeting in Jammu today, he reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and will remain so irrespective of whatever Pakistan does to create disturbances in the state. Mr. Rao said elections are the only way left for restoring normality in the state.

The Shiromani Akali Dal-Master Tara Singh [Group] activists today staged a demonstration near the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi to protest against its high commissioner, Mr. Riaz Khokhar's, remarks on Jammu and Kashmir. In a memorandum addressed to the Pakistani prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, the Dal president, Jathedar Rachpal Singh, said it is a violation of international convention and demanded that he be recalled.

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India: Campaigning for Third Phase of Election Ends; Repoll Held

BK0505135596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Campaigning for the third phase of polling for 183 Lok Sabha and 154 West Bengal assembly constituencies came to a close at 1700 this evening. The election will be held on Tuesday [7 May] for 34 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar, 14 in Gujarat, 20 in Madhya Pradesh, 24 in Maharashtra, nine in Orissa, 52 in Uttar Pradesh, and 22 in West Bengal, two each in Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, and Tripura, and one each in Mizoram, and Nagaland. Polling will also be held on Tuesday [7 May] in the three remaining tribal segments of the Mandi Lok Sabha constituency in Himachal Pradesh besides two assembly by-elections in Bihar and one each in Maharashtra and Orissa. Over 21 crore people are eligible to exercise their franchise.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of elections. Paramilitary forces are being deployed in extremist-affected areas in Bihar in view of the poll boycott call given by some groups. In Uttar Pradesh, over 1 lakh antisocial elements have been rounded up all over the state as a preventive measure. The Election Commission and the Jammu and Kashmir government have formulated instant preventive measures to eliminate the possibility of violence on the polling days in the state.

Repolling was held today in 531 polling stations in five states. These included 471 polling booths in Bihar, 28 in Uttar Pradesh, 22 in Orissa, six in West Bengal, and four in Tamil Nadu. The polling is reported to have passed off peacefully. Repolling had been ordered following complaints of violence and poll irregularities during the second phase of elections on Thursday.

In West Bengal, repolling will be held for one polling booth in Kalimpong assembly constituency in Darjeeling District tomorrow. It has been necessitated due to a technical problem as the polling officers left the booth much before the completion of polling time last Thursday.

Four central observers for Srinagar and Anantnag parliamentary constituencies arrived in Srinagar today on a four-day visit. They will meet the representatives of political parties and candidates contesting the election and discuss poll-related matters. Elections in Anantnag will be held on the 23d and in Srinagar on the 30th of this month.

India: Congress Leaders Express 'Full Faith' in Rao Leadership

BK0605065996 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several senior Indian National Congress leaders, including some cabinet ministers, today expressed their full faith in the leadership of Mr. Narasimha Rao. Addressing a joint press conference in New Delhi, they said that the leadership question is an intraparty affair.

[Begin recording] [Santosh Mohan Dev] Some so-called leaders within the party and those who have no relevance ....

[Unidentified speaker, interrupting] Not within the party, the persons who have been expelled.

[Santosh Mohan Dev] Expelled.

[Unidentified reporter] What about [Industry Minister] Karunakaran?

[Unidentified speaker] Karunakaran has expressed his personal view. It's alright.

[External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee] Who will be the leader of the party, that will be decided by the party itself, not by the outsiders. [end recording]

India: Steps Finalized To Prevent Violence During Kashmir Voting

BK0605070896 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, the three-phase polling for six Lok Sabha constituencies begins on Tuesday with voting in Jammu and Ladakh constituencies being held on Tuesday [7 May]. The campaigning for these two constituencies ended this evening.

The president of the Indian National Congress, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, visited Jammu today to canvass for his party. Addressing a meeting in Jammu this afternoon, Mr. Narasimha Rao asserted that Jammu and Kashmir will continue to remain an integral part of India, irrespective of whatever Pakistan does to create disturbances in the state. He said Pakistan could make more mischiefs in the state to thwart the polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Rao said elections are the only way left for restoring normalcy in the state.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission and Jammu and Kashmir Government have formulated instant preventive measures to eliminate the possibility of violence on the polling days in the state. A decision to this effect was taken in Jammu after talks between the election

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commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy, and the state governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao.

Meanwhile, the inspector general of the Border Security Force, Kashmir Range, has said that every effort is being made by the security forces to safeguard the election process in the state.

[Begin Appa Sahib Allor recording—identified by caption] Preparations are on. The political process is gradually picking up. Every effort will be made by the security forces to safeguard the election processes. Our best effort is to make sure that neither the workers nor the candidates are harmed. At the same time, we have taken all the precautions to seal the border so that the (?infiltration) is brought down to the minimum. The locals at the same time are encouraging us that the elections should get through. They are coming, giving us the information regarding the activities of militants, their plans. [end recording]

Iran

Iran: Deputy Foreign Minister Departs for PRC

LD0605060996 Tehran IRNA in English 0559 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 6, IRNA — Deputy foreign minister for Asia-Pacific affairs, Alaeddin Borujerdi left here Sunday [5 May] for Beijing on a two-day working visit to China.

Prior to his departure, in an interview with 'IRAN NEWS', he stated that he would attend a conference in Beijing which will discuss means for the expansion of communications for economic and commercial relations between Asian and European countries.

China will be the starting point for linking Asia with Europe, Borujerdi said, adding "Chinese want to revive the silk route which has a history of 18 centuries of hectic commercial and economic activities between Asia and Europe."

A total of 20 countries are participating in the Beijing conference.

Iran: Javadi-Amoli Delivers Qom Friday Prayers

LD0405203896

[FBIS Report] Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1342 GMT broadcasts a recording of the Qom Friday prayers sermons from 3 May. The sermons were delivered by Ayatollah 'Abdollah Javadi-Amoli, a member of Assembly of Experts and of the Guardian Council.

The first sermon was devoted to the issue of piety and the 67th chapter of "Nahj al-Balaghah", a religious text attributed to Imam 'Ali,- which concerns the 'Id al-Ghadir, when the Prophet Muhammad is said to have passed on his mantle to 'Ali.

In the second sermon, Javadi-Amoli spoke about the significance of what Imam 'Ali had to say about justice and people's rights.

Javadi-Amoli refered to the promotion of Qom from township to province and expressed appreciations on his own behalf and on behalf of Qom's inhabitants.

He then said: "Regarding the Abrahamite hajj. You saw the fruitful and useful message of the esteemed leader; you reviewed the situation in the Middle East from close by. The innocent people of Lebanon were subjected to air raids for 16 days. We have also experienced air raids, in Qom and elsewhere, and we know how terrible it is. People were being killed for 16 days while more than two million, or approximately two million pilgrims, were walking around the holy House of God. Yet there was no mention at all of freedom. And God stated: They went round the holy House of God and prayed for the freedom of Palestine. Think of the tumult of two million pilgrims walking around the holy House of God. But look at the state of oppressed Palestine and the state of deprived Lebanon.

"You should turn to the blessed sermon of the Lord of the Faithful where there is mention of a letter he wrote to Malek al- Ashtar." "Malek, this religion was captive in the hands of others before me. I came and set it free. Well, were there no Friday prayers in those days? Was there no fasting? No religious alms? No hajj? This was the quintessence of 'Ali's epistle. He said: This religion was captive and I set it free.

"Are the two holy shrines not held captive today by the House of Sa'ud?

"And should not two million pilgrims walking around the liberating house cry out: Death to America! However, thanks be to God, our honorable Iranian pilgrims and other honorable non-Iranian pilgrims did chant that they had come to perform the ritual of going round the holy House of God. They chanted this slogan both at the holy mosque beside the Ka'bah and at the ritual of throwing stones at the devil and also at Mount 'Arafat. But, the point is that the two holy shrines are held captive by the House of Sa'ud.

"Another issue is that we need cohesion before anything else and more than ever. If someone has erred or blundered in a speech or in their writings, it will be resolved through the fatwa of senior clergymen [maraje'] and the guidelines of the Friday sermons. The hezbollah should be strengthened; chastity should be strengthened. But we request our esteemed hezbollah

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brethren not to give pretexts to foreigners and not to offend those whose reputation should be respected — although the fatwa is the same fatwa of the senior clergymen and the guideline is the same guideline."

Javadi-Amoli concluded by pointing to the "shameful" agreement between the Israeli and U.S. governments following the attack against Lebanon and told Lebanon's Hizballah to be sure that those who were martyred in these attacks had gone to paradise and that: "Lebanon had really not lost anything since neither 'Arafat, Peres, nor Clinton had gained anything. What they were left with was losses whereas what the Hizballah was left with was divine grace." He hoped that "global arrogance" will never achieve victory and that God will avenge the deeds of the "cruel and the bloodthirsty."

Iran: Neyriz Farmers Brief Rafsanjani on Integration Plan

LD0305190596 Tehran IRNA in English 1521 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz, May. 3, IRNA — Farmers of Neyriz district of Fars Province had a friendly meeting with President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Friday [3 May], during which they stressed that the integration plan of small agricultural plots has doubled their income. The farmer's representative in the region said the farmers are making great efforts to counter the U.S. sanctions and lead the Islamic Republic of Iran to self-sufficiency.

The anti-American tone of the farmers' representative was followed by applauds of the other farmers in confirmation of his remarks.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani described the integration plan a valuable and sacred move which is aimed at increasing agricultural output and decreasing maintenance cost, calling on all the farmers of the country to spare no effort to this end. The president said the integration plan besides enhancing the country's agriculture output by the end of the second five year development plan, will save the country from dependence and even pave the way for export of agricultural items.

Prior to the address of Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani, the agriculture minister, 'Isa Kalantari, presented an account of the national integration plan.

Iran: Rafsanjani Urges Use of Modern Technology in Quarries

LD0305172596 Tehran IRNA in English 1624 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz, May. 3, IRNA — In the fourth day of President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's visit to Fars province, the president inspected the Chena stone quarry in Neiriz [as received] Friday 3 May].

The president underlined the necessity for employing new technological methods and said that Islamic Republic of Iran treasures a special category of stones used for decorative purposes, adding that such an item could occupy special position as a non-oil product and earn the country hard currency in exports.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani stressed on the use of modern excavation techniques, saying that traditional methods of detonating quarries caused 70 percent loss in the yield per ton, destroying the country's valuable stone resources. President Rafsanjani said the use of new modern technology in the mining enterprise has notably decreased the rate of damage.

Iran: Rafsanjani Stresses Danger of Arms Dependence

LD0405104296 Tehran IRNA in English 1033 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz, Fars Prov., May 4, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here Saturday [4 May] that the experience of eight years of the sacred defense proved that arms dependence is a great danger to the country.

Addressing the military and law-enforcement forces of this southern province, the president added that due to this very experience, the Islamic Iran, in comparison with the developing countries, has one of the largest military industries at its disposal, thanks to the efforts of Iranian experts.

President Rafsanjani who arrived in this southern province Tuesday on a 6-day visit, stressed that Iran's defense industries will never be used for offensive purposes and the Islamic spirit of the armed forces assures this principle.

In spite of wicked efforts of cruel enemies such as the U.S. and Israel, the entire country is engaged in construction activities in complete tranquility and security. This, added the president is due to the vigilant presence of the armed forces.

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Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Announces Programs for Industries

LD0405130996 Tehran IRNA in English 1217 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz, May 4, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here on Saturday [4 May] announced that the government will launch programs for the development of industries in Fars Province.

While visiting an exhibition of the latest industrial achievements of the province, the president underlined expansion of trade and industrial relations between the southern Iranian Fars Province and the Arab littoral states in the Persian Gulf.

He said the government would grant export letter of credit to the industrial units of Fars Province to help boost the industrial exports.

The industrial exhibit of Fars Province consists of 141 pavilions.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani who arrived in this province Tuesday on a 6-day visit, has so far opened a number of development projects.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Praises Obedience to Leader

LD0605115896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the beginning of today's open Majles session, Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri congratulated all Muslims, particularly Shi'ites and the devotees of the pure and immaculate family [of the prophet], on the arrival of the Qadir feast, the celebration of guidance and guardianship.

Deliberating the blessings of the guardianship of the jurisconsult [velayat-e faqih], he said that, since the formation of the Islamic government in Iran, people have enabled the country to advance through the stages of development by obeying the guardian. Forces who bravely resisted the assault of the enemy and achieved victory during eight years of sacred defense continue to construct the country through their obedience to the guardian of the cause [vali-e amr]. Today the blessings of the Islamic system, consequences of construction, and efforts to implement the development plan are evident in all parts of the country.

He also referred to the wretched acts, by the enemies of the revolution and the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to interfere in society and among the Muslim people of Iran.

He said the enemy is concentrating its attacks against the system's fundamental canon, the guardianship of the jurisconsult, but fortunately the people, our government, and our Majles are alert and vigilant and will obey his eminence the leader of the revolution, and will defeat any plot against the revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: SOBH Says Outlawed Democratic Party Executes Kurdish 'Spy'

LD0305142696 Tehran SOBH in Persian 30 Apr 96 p3

[Article: "Outlawed Democratic Party Executes Kurd"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The radio of the outlawed Democratic Party [Kordestan Democratic Party of Iran] announced: "This mini group has condemned to death one of the inhabitants of the Kurdish region for criticizing the party."

The radio accused "Firuz Nowbahari" of spying, and said: "This spy joined the party in [13]72 [Iranian year beginning 21 March 1993], and since then, he has been providing information to Iranian agents."

The outlawed Democratic Party has thus far formally accepted responsibility for the execution of a number of people who discovered the nature of this mini-group and left it.

According to the radio, Firuz Nowbahari's execution decree was issued on 16 Farvardin [4 April], but security officials of the region have so far not confirmed the radio's claim.

Iran: Paper Says Israel To Gain From Ties With Turkey

LD0505203196 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 1 May 96 p 16

[Unattributed commentary: "Zionist Infiltration in Turkish State Institutions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The political, military, and economic ties between Turkey and the Zionist regime, which have now reached the stage at which Israeli fighter planes are being based in that country, are expanding far away from any commotion in Turkey's press and mass media.

It would seem that the Turks and the Zionists are rapidly expanding the range of their economic, political, and commercial cooperation, with a minimum of publicity about the extent of their relationship. They have deliberately kept their cooperation out of the media limelight so that, in their opinion, they can be saved from internal

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and external opposition. Without question, this cooperation is more advantageous to the Israeli side. This may be why the Zionists are more insistent on expanding these relations.

Relations between the two governments ruling over Turkey and occupied Palestine have been growing steadily in recent years under the impact of several factors. The coordination and political and strategic alliance between the United States, Turkey, and Israel in the course of regional ups and downs have been the main factor behind the growing governmental cooperation between Ankara and Tel Aviv, and the exchange of visits between the senior officials of these two countries has also had considerable influence on these developing relations.

The events relating to the Oil War during 1369-70 [1990-91] must, in reality, be seen as the start of a new phase in the political unity and alliance between Israel and Turkey. Both the laic politicians in the ruling system in Turkey and Zionist officials see the political alliance between Tel Aviv and Ankara as a way of strengthening their brittle political front in the Middle East and have become attached to it.

It is being said that some factions of the political parties ruling over Turkish society are, with full knowledge of this policy and of the aims that the Zionists are pursuing in the expansion of their ties with them, deliberately trying to increase the Israelis' cultural, political, and security influence in Turkey, an effort the dangers of which seem to be receiving much less attention and concern from other statesmen in that country.

In keeping with Zionist interests, the officials in Ankara have expanded their economic and commercial ties with Israel to the greatest possible extent in recent years. These ties, which were carried out secretly before the military coup of 1359 [Iranian year beginning in March 1980], became gradually more open after this date and, in the course of the years in which Israel has been carrying out its compromise talks, they have become fully active and explicit.

In Bahman 1371 [Iranian month beginning 21 January 1993], Turkey upgraded its diplomatic relations with the Zionist regime to the level of exchanging ambassadors and, in the wake of this, economic exchanges also grew and expanded.

During the five years since they started, the compromise talks between the Arabs and the regime occupying Jerusalem have made Turkey and some other governments in the region impudent about establishing relations with Israel and granting it one-sided and humiliating concessions. In the light of such unthinking stances, the Zionists have advanced their policies to the limit in the Middle East and have now reached the point when they can base military aircraft in the heart of Turkey. The acceptance of these aircraft by Turkey — and in conditions in which the Islamic country of Lebanon is grieving the victims of the savage crimes committed by the Zionists — can have no other meaning than thumbing their nose at the beliefs and opinion of the Muslim nations of the region, especially the two wronged nations of Palestine and Lebanon. This is why Turkey will, undoubtedly, not come out the winner in the continuation of the policy it has adopted towards usurper Israel.

Iran: Velayati—Lebanon Cease-Fire Fosters Regional Cooperation

LD0505102496 Tehran IRNA in English 0643 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 5, IRNA — The agreement leading to a cease-fire in Lebanon created a new atmosphere for closer cooperation among Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Russia and the European Union (EU), Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said, adding that the events also opened opportunities for Russia to renew its active involvement in the Middle East.

In an interview with the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' printed Sunday [5 May], he expressed hope that cooperation among these countries would continue in future problem areas, stressing that bilateral and international efforts of Tehran, Damascus, Moscow, Lebanon, the EU, especially France, as well as other countries as being instrumental in bringing about the cease-fire.

Moreover, the joint efforts undertaken to solve the crisis in Lebanon also drew Russia towards a close and meaningful cooperation in the Middle East, he noted, underlining that this was an achievement in itself.

As to Washington's involvement, the daily quoted Velayati as saying that while the Americans appeared to be actively in search of a solution, they were not really interested in bringing about peace in the region.

The U.S. opposed Russian participation in the supervisory committee to monitor the cease-fire, and Washington also attempted to block France's entry, to which the U.S. later agreed.

Speaking of Iran's latest diplomatic achievements related to the recent developments in Lebanon, the foreign minister underlined that the halting of the war in Lebanon stopped the killing of innocent people.

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As to Iran's possible participation in the Middle East peace talks, Velayati told the paper, "The U.S. and Israel are eagerly waiting for Iran's involvement in the Middle East peace talks but (Tehran) will not participate because it believes the talks cannot restore peace in the region."

Iran: Tehran Times Calls For Trial of 'Israeli War Criminals'

LD0505101796 Tehran IRNA in English 0757 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 5, IRNA — The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' Sunday called on the U.N. not to hesitate in putting Israeli war criminals on trial.

The editorial was commenting on the statement of General Frank van Kappen, an envoy of the U.N. secretary-general, that Israeli artillery deliberately targeted the U.N. base at Qana on April 18, causing the death of 102 Lebanese who sought shelter in the compound.

"On the basis of van Kappen's findings, Israeli leaders are, without any doubt, war criminals," said the paper, adding, "the U.N. should avoid a double-standard and put the criminal Israeli leaders on trial just as it did in Bosnia."

Stating that the main motive behind the Israeli attack on Lebanon was to eliminate all Muslims, the editorial criticized the U.N. for not taking any practical step to end the genocide when the war was in full swing.

"One of the main hindrances in the way of an objective functioning of the U.N. is that the U.S. has practically hijacked the international body," the editorial stressed, noting, "the U.N. has lost its credibility on account of its double-standard and its surrender to U.S. bullying."

To improve its image among nations, the U.N. should not miss an opportunity in bringing war criminals to book," it advised.

Aside from healing the wounds of the Lebanese people, the paper underlined that this might also prevent similar heinous crimes from being committed against humanity.

Iran: Radio Comments on Israel-PLO Talks in Taba

LD0505165396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1000 GMT 5 May 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of final talks between representatives of the [Palestinian] autonomous establishment and the Zionist regime are being held in the Egyptian town of Taba today.

According to previous agreements, today's discussions were to concentrate on five vital Palestinian issues: the future of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees, the Zionist settlements, use of water resources, and setting borders and determining future relations with neighbors.

But the encircling of the autonomous region and the Zionist's refusal to withdraw from Hebron has made the discussions more difficult and extended.

Furthermore, despite the variety and complexity of the remaining issues on the agenda, only one day has been allocated to the talks. And, despite previous agreements, the rest of the discussions have been postponed until elections of the Zionist regime.

These facts clearly indicate that the true aim of the present talks is to conceal the obstruction in the process of compromise; and that the future of the talks are extremely vague and there is little possibility of success.

In fact it is likely that the extent of quarrels between the two sides will put an end to the discussions.

The Zionist regime, since the beginning of the discussions between the PLO and Tel Aviv, has tried to advance the talks only according to its own interests — and has increasingly violated the rights of the Palestinians, despite the fact that [Yasir] 'Arafat held an election for the autonomous regions.

Believing that 'Arafat approves of the status quo, Tel Aviv continued its policy to build settlements in the autonomous region immediately after the elections for the area.

In view of the fact that vital issues are interrelated and that the fate of Zionist settlements takes precedence over other issues, to continue the policy on the settlements was a warning by Tel Aviv to 'Arafat — which also indicates the possibility of a delay and imprecision in the discussions.

Nevertheless, 'Arafat has failed to take into consideration these violations by Tel Aviv and has changed, in a insensible act, the Palestinian national charter. This move has not only affected his position in the talks it has increased the protest of the Palestinian people against the process of compromise to an extent that it has reached the PLO [Central] Committee.

In such circumstances, and in view of the unpredictable consequences of the elections, the increased opposition to the compromise and the possibility of an increase in the quarrels between the PLO and Tel Aviv in future negotiations, it should be pointed out that delays in the

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discussions and decisions has darkened the prospects of the process of compromise and has brought about the possibility that the process of compromise will fail, despite many years of effort.

Iran: UN Documents Prove Qana Raid 'Intentional'

NC0605071896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 6 May 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently published documents indicate that the bombing of the UN forces' headquarters in Qana during the 16-day war by the Zionist regime against the Lebanese people was intentional. About 100 people were killed during the bombing. The Zionist regime is trying to pretend that Qana was bombed by mistake, unintentionally. Tel Aviv alleges it thought it was bombing Lebanese Resistance forces' bases when it bombed the UN forces' headquarters.

The United Nations has assigned a delegation to examine the issue. The delegation is trying to gather information and documents to prove that the bombing was intentional, in which case another resolution, which has already been drafted and condemns the Zionist regime, will be approved at the UN General Assembly.

Despite clear documents and proof, America is trying to inflict pressure to stop the resolution being approved. Thus, together with Tel Aviv, it is trying to submit documents refuting that the bombing of the UN forces' headquarters was intentional.

The White House and Tel Aviv are worried that the Zionist regime's position at the United Nations and on other world forums will deteriorate further. For years America has been trying to bring the Zionist regime out of its international isolation and impose it on the rest of the world. Thus, although according to one of the UN General Assembly's resolutions, Zionism was paralleled with racism, America and the Zionist regime have tried to gain their allies' support to abrogate this resolution. It was through these efforts that the Zionist regime could hide its criminal face and don a peaceseeking mask at world forums.

The deterioration of the Zionist regime's position after the raid on Lebanon and the massacre of defenseless Lebanese people has thwarted many years of efforts by America and the Zionist regime. Confirming this reality, the White House's permanent representative at the United Nations stated some time ago that the war in Lebanon intensifies Tel Aviv's international isolation, rendering useless American efforts to include the Zionist regime with the rest of the world. America's representative expressed concern that this would create a rift among the various countries and change their stance on the compromise process.

The Zionist regime's nature is expansionist, aggressive, and racist. If documents and proof are examined impartially, not only will this reality be proven, but the raid on Qana too will be further clarified. If the various countries make fair decisions they will have no alternative, but to reject the Zionist regime and condemn its acts.

Iran: Lebanon's Hizballah Offers To Rebuild Destroyed Areas

NC0305181396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah of Lebanon has declared its complete readiness to rebuild the residential areas the Zionist enemy destroyed during its latest attacks against the Muslim Lebanese people. Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim stressed this stance during his visit yesterday to the residential areas damaged by the sinful Zionist aggression. He said that reconstruction has actually begun and we will pay compensation to the owners of homes and shops that have been destroyed. He appealed to altruistic people, and particularly the Lebanese Government, to offer aid and support in the reconstruction process. He said: Hizballah's declaration of readiness to share in the reconstruction does not mean canceling the role of others in the reconstruction, especially the Lebanese Government, which has huge resources. He praised the Lebanese masses' support for Hizballah during the confrontation with the Zionist enemy. He stressed that following its victory, Hizballah will assume reconstruction responsibilities and stand up to the enemies of God, especially the United States and the Zionist entity.

Iran: French, European Resistance to U.S. 'Espionage' Viewed

LD0405085996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0350 GMT 4 May 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] French authorities have accused America of engaging in espionage and unfriendly acts against their country. According to the French authorities U.S. spy planes have flown over French nuclear installations and factories and photographed them. That report reveals America's latest illegal operations on the international level. In 1373 [year beginning 21 March 1994], during the premiership of Edouard Balladur, five

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American nationals, who were engaged in espionage against France under the cover of diplomatic work at the U.S. embassy in Paris, were expelled from France.

The incident can be assessed from two points of view. One is that it will certainly affect U.S.-France relations or, to put it another way, U.S.-Europe relations. As France and Europe adopt more independent policies from U.S. interests, America's concern will increase. That independence will gradually embrace all aspects of relations between the two sides of the Atlantic. Europe's resistance in the GATT talks, Europe's appeal to the World Trade Organization over America's illegal embargoes against European trade partners, as well as Western Europe's efforts to prevent American cultural dominance are some of the moves that in recent years have caused unhappiness in Washington.

Europe is increasingly relying on its own resources and initiatives in the political and security fields, besides the cultural and economic fields. Although in the Bosnian issue the EU did not adopt a proper stance, the experience in the aggression of the Zionist regime against south Lebanon forced France to take diplomatic initiative despite explicit U.S. opposition.

Setting aside the relations based on diplomatic treachery and suspicion — which is prevailing between America and Europe — American acts of espionage against French nuclear activities are important from the international aspect and the issue of nuclear disarmament. No doubt there are differences of opinion on this issue among the five countries that have nuclear weapons. Also, without doubt the rest of the world is also displeased with the deceptive policies of those powers. While the UN Disarmament Commission has a comprehensive nuclear arms ban on its agenda and has been negotiating since last winter to draw up the treaty, Western nuclear powers are equipping themselves with more modern nuclear arms by acquiring nuclear technical knowledge with small-scale nuclear tests and computer simulations. That probably is the source of the lack of trust among the nuclear powers and the lack of trust toward them by the rest of the world.

Iran: Demonstrations Against U.S., Israel Held in South Africa

NC0405081596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 4 May 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] As you have heard in the news, thousands of South African Muslims staged demonstrations against the United States and the Zionists yesterday. After offering Friday [3 May] prayers in Capetown, they marched toward the Zionist regime's embassy.

Condemning the Zionist regime's armed forces for their attack on Lebanese refugees in a shelter at the UN base in Qana, an attack that resulted in over a hundred victims, the demonstrators shouted slogans of "death to Israel" and "death to the United States."

These anti-American and anti-Zionist demonstrations are the continuation of a series of similar reactions throughout the Islamic world condemning the Zionist regime's recent aggression and the United States' blatant support for it.

These reactions, which have taken place all over the world, earth, have terrified the Zionist regime. After the extensive protests against the Zionists' latest atrocities in Lebanon, Tel Aviv officials sought to divert public attention by saying there was a possibility of attacks against the interests of the Zionist regime all over the world. They even claimed the Lebanese Islamic Resistance Movement is carrying out operations in South America and Africa. These claims were later retracted, after local officials in Tel Aviv's embassies abroad denied them.

It has become obvious that the objective of voicing such claims is to exert pressure on governments to prevent the staging of anti-Zionist reactions. South Africa is one of the countries about which the Tel Aviv officials had complained. The Zionists claimed the Lebanese Hizballah had a military base in South Africa.

The demonstrations by South African Muslims yesterday, which took place after the official rebuttal of the Zionist regime's claims, indicate that the Zionist regime's ploys to rein in anti-Zionist reaction have encountered defeat.

Another significant point that emerges from the South African Muslims' demonstrations is that they chanted anti-U.S. slogans. Condemning the U.S. Government's terrorism, the demonstrators expressed their loathing of Washington's incarceration of Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric, and called for a reappraisal of the verdict of the unjust courts of the United States against the cleric. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman has been sentenced to life imprisonment in the United States on charges of involvement in terrorist operations in the United States.

In general, yesterday's big demonstrations by the South African Muslims can be considered evidence of the wave of international opposition against Washington and Tel Aviv's domineering attitude and aggression, which is becoming clearer and more extensive daily.

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Iran: U.S. Worried About French Influence in Mideast

LD0405164696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0954 GMT 4 May 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] While France is utilizing all its power to further increase its presence in the Middle East, America and its allies, including the Zionist regime, are intensely worried about those efforts. America's concern stems from the fact that a French presence weakens the U.S. presence in the Middle East and takes away from Washington the monopoly of a dominant position from which it imposes its views on all the developments in the region.

Observers take Jacques Chirac's historic visit to Lebanon last Farvardin [Iranian month beginning 20 March] as the beginning of a new French presence in the Middle East. After that, with the start of the crisis in Lebanon, France, more than any other country, stepped in and tried to end the Zionist regime's onslaught against Lebanon. When the Zionist regime was raining shells on Lebanon by air, land, and sea and America, failing to condemn that regime, was supporting it politically and by propaganda, France's active presence aimed at ending Tel Aviv's aggression against Lebanon led to Paris acquiring a good status in the public opinion, in particular among the people of the region. That is while America, which tried for many years to present itself as an impartial mediator in Middle East issues, showed itself as the Zionist regime's ally and partner. That further destroyed America's status among the region's people. France, with its active presence and its relatively acceptable proposed plan, managed to promote its policy in the Middle East. After that, also, France, through helping Lebanon in its reconstruction of the destroyed installations and centers, tried to complete its plan, so much so that yesterday a French ship unloaded more than 700 tonnes of electrical equipment and building materials in Beirut.

On the other hand, after France's presence for settling the Lebanese crisis, Paris turned into a center for diplomatic toing and froing aimed at pursuing the Middle East developments. For instance last week [Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on] Peres and [Lebanese President] Ilyas al-Hirawi visited Paris, and this week [Jordan's] King Husayn will be visiting there. France's presence not only affected the Lebanese issue, it also affected another crisis in the region, namely the crisis between Eritrea and Yemen which began at the beginning of last Azar [month beginning 22 November] and is still continuing because of the invasion of the Hanish island by Eritrean forces. In that crisis also, France stepped in from the very beginning. Recently it has been announced that a French plan for settlement of the dispute through arbitration has been accepted by Asmara and Sanaa. If that comes to pass then France has once again proven its effective presence in another part of the region.

All that, which speaks of Paris becoming active in Middle East developments, indicate a change in the regional equations which can lead to further limiting of the U.S. role. America and its allies, have been trying for years, in coordination, to shape the developments unilaterally. France's presence will face them with a hurdle which is not so easy to cross.

Iran: Hajj Supervisor Criticizes Saudi Government

LD0505183696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammadi- Reyshahri, the representative of the Supreme Jurisconsult and the supervisor of the Iranian pilgrims, in an interview with our correspondent in Mecca, said that the hajj was the best opportunity for reviewing the problems of the world of Islam and finding solutions to them.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammadi-Reyshahri, the representative of the Supreme Jurisconsult and the supervisor of the Iranian pilgrims, said: The spontaneous actions of the pilgrims to the Holy House of God in expressing their hatred and disgust for the crimes of the Zionist regime and America, which started last year, are regarded as an important chapter in the hajj.

About the disavowal of infidels ceremony at this year's hajj, he said: The disavowal of infidels ritual is the political pillar of the hajj. This year we performed it in the presence of masses of Iranian and non-Iranian pilgrims at 'Arafat. And it was proven once again to the Saudi Government that we would perform the ceremony in any possible form.

He expressed deep regret about the columns of Saudi troops being stationed in front of the esteemed leader's headquarters. He added: While the innocent and defenseless people of Lebanon were the victims of the fiercest attacks of the Zionist regime, it was hoped that this year the Saudi Government would not repeat the same mistakes of the previous years. Saudi Arabia's military show of strength to the pilgrims to the House of God was a clear political error and unjustifiable. [passage omitted] [end recording]

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Iran: Commission Discusses Iran, Pakistan Antidrug Campaign

LD0505140196 Tehran IRNA in English 1331 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 5, IRNA — The third meeting of Iran-Pakistan coordination and cooperation commission to fight cross border drug trafficking opened in Tehran in the presence of the United Nations officials.

The commission was formed following a border agreement reached between the two countries.

The meeting is expected to formulate the executive procedure for exchange of information, patrolling, joint operation against drug traffickers in the eastern part of the country and setting up border posts and barriers in the frontier areas between the two countries.

According to the former arrangements, the United Nations has undertaken part of the expenditure of setting up barriers, checkpoints, telecommunication equipment, special night vision cameras and required vehicles.

Iran: IRNA Gives Details of Iraqis Residing in Khuzestan

LD0505133896 Tehran IRNA in English 1250 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., May 5, IRNA — About 25,000 Iraqi nationals, residing in this southwestern province, possess green cards which contain all required personal information.

An official in charge of the expatriates department at the governor general's office said on Sunday [5 May] that the Iraqis are mostly living in the provincial cities of Ahvaz and Susangerd.

He put the total number of Iraqi nationals residing in Ahvaz at 12,000 and said they enjoyed educational and health services and other kinds of amenities.

Iran: UN Envoy—U.S. Efforts To Isolate Iran Have 'Failed'

LD0305122496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. futile efforts in isolating the Islamic Republic of Iran in international, political, and economic scenes have once again failed.

Dr. Kamal Kharrazi [name as heard], ambassador and permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the United Nations, yesterday afternoon in a speech in the presence of the members of this organization's association in the United States said: Unilateral U.S. embargoes against Tehran, not only have not stopped the process of growth and development in Iran, but they have been a factor in accelerating Iran's (?self-efficiency) in all fields.

On the other hand, Brent Scowcroft, former U.S. national security adviser, also yesterday confessed that the United States, following the opposition of world countries, including its allies to the embargo against Iran, has faced with complete failure and Bill Clinton is isolated. [sentence as heard]

Simultaneous with the threat of U.S. trade embargoes against Iran, Tehran has made great efforts to sign bilateral agreements with different countries' oil companies.

Iran: Paper Urges Cairo To 'Mend Fences' With Tehran, Damascus

LD0605121296 Tehran IRNA in English 1002 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 6, IRNA — An English daily said Monday [6 May] that the Middle Eastern nations can play a crucial role in thwarting U.S. imperialism if they combine the leverage of owning raw materials with the political influence of the European Union.

The 'TEHRAN TIMES' expressed hope that the regional countries were coming to their senses, especially after the Israeli genocide of Lebanese Muslims.

"They are gradually realizing that despite peace gestures, the U.S. will not give up its support of the Zionist regime, even at the cost of setting the whole region on fire," said the editorial.

Stressing that the slow reaction of the international community to stop the Israeli genocide of Muslims indicated that the world attitude towards the Middle East needs a radical change, the editorial said that moves should be taken both on regional and international levels.

The war in Lebanon has prepared the ground for a more meaningful cooperation among regional countries, TEHRAN TIMES said adding that Egypt which was the first country to sign a peace accord with Israel is now more than ever inclined to join the anti-Israeli bloc.

"Indeed the U.S.-Israeli bloc has been active in encircling Syria and posing serious threats to Egypt's national security by signing a military accord with Turkey." The military accord was signed to contain the potential and actual anti-Israeli frontline states.

The editorial advised the states to close ranks and consolidate bilateral and multilateral cooperation among themselves to reduce dependence on the U.S. and in the

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long run, to force the U.S., the main supporter of the Zionist regime — to balance its attitude towards the Middle East.

Egypt should review its Middle Eastern policy, said the paper adding that Cairo is in a position to play a crucial role in changing the balance in favor of the Islamic front if it mends fences with Iran and Syria, the two pillars of the anti-Israeli bloc.

"Iran is ready to extend all possible assistance in consolidating this front," stressed the paper.

Turning to the European Union, it said the EU has been sidelined by the U.S. in major international political events of the post-Cold War era. "This isolationism has had its repercussions for the EU not only in the political, but also in the economic arena," concluded the paper.

Iran: Paper Criticizes Factions' Election Behavior

LD0505213696 Tehran 'ASR-E MA in Persian 1 May 96 p 1

[Editorial: "Tension Is Not in Anyone's Interest"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of the elections set a good and successful example to all the groups and individuals who sought to play a role, matching their political weight, in the country's political arena and who sought to fulfill this objective in a calm and healthy competitive atmosphere.

To the same extent, however, the consequences of the first round of the elections were rather unpleasant and even defeatist for a political current which considers the people's vote to be window-dressing and thinks of itself as the pivot of truth and religious law. This is why, in the second round of elections, this political current resorted to all manner of illegal measures aimed at changing the results of the elections. By creating tension and undermining the rules that ensured healthy political competition, it destroyed the calm atmosphere that had existed in the first round of the elections.

There is some indication that this current intends to intensify its drive to invalidate constituency results and voting booths and confront those elected deputies who are not prepared to submit to it. Meanwhile, the illegal actions of this faction may, in certain cases, result in unpleasant protests and reactions. The outcome of such a situation is very harmful, considering the current circumstances of the country, and would, above all, make the system more vulnerable to overt and covert foreign threats.

Therefore, it is the duty of all political groups that believe in the system and the revolution and that seek healthy political freedom and competition, to avoid provocative confrontations which create tension. They should, at the same time, emphasize the law, the right to freely criticize the unlawful activities and excesses of the said current and to decisively condemn the irresponsible and illegal actions of any individuals or groups.

Iran: Gas Conduit Begins Operation

LD0505190396 Tehran IRNA in English 1754 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz Fars Province, May 5, IRNA — A project for conduiting and injecting natural gas from Aghar and Dalan to Maroun wells in nearby Khuzestan Province of Iran started operation Sunday [5 May].

Intially, the wells of Dalan give as much as 17 million cubic meters of gas daily to increase to 40 million cubic meters of gas daily and 15,000 barrels of gas liquids later on. The project that improves national gas output by 100,000 barrels daily, has cost 70 billion rials and has taken a little more than four years to complete.

Derricks for the project were manufactured solely by Iranians and also drillings and peripheral facilities including the laying of about 850 kilometers of pipe were undertaken by them helping the country save as much as 50 million dollars in foreign exchange expedntures.

Gas mines in Afghar and Dalan have a combined reservoir of about 6.8 billion trillion square feet.

The gas from the gas field is conducted to 'Bidboland' of Khuzestan province of Iran and qas liquids thereof is conduited to Taheri port near Bushehr for export.

Aghar and Dalan are 165 kilometers southwest of Shiraz, and part of the country of Farashband within the municipality of Firuzabad.

President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani who is visiting Fars province of Iran overlooked the inaugural ceremonies Sunday.

Iran: President Inaugurates Dam in Fars Province

LD0505193296 Tehran IRNA in English 1825 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz, May 5, IRNA - Ruzbahan Dam in Kazerun (Fars province) was inaugurated by President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Sunday [5 May].

The dam running over six billion rials, will contribute to the development of 3,000 hectares of arable lands,

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increasing agricultural outputs from 10 to 14 thousand tons per annum.

It will also supply potable water to 30 rural areas. the height of the dam built on Shirin river is about 7.5 meters and its water capacity per second is eight cubic meters.

Iran: Airport in Sarakhs Begins Operation

LD0505193896 Tehran IRNA in English 1834 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sarakhs, Khorassan Province, May 5, IRNA — An international airport in this border city of Khorassan province of Iran started interim operation today. Sarakhs of Iran is within only a few kilometers from another city with the same name that is across the border in the Republic of Turkmenistan.

Building operations of the airport bearing the name 'Almass' (diamond in Persian) started on February 9, this year and took less than three months to complete, that is about one-tenth of the expected period by international standards.

The airport has a runway of four kilometers with a width of 60 meters for which about 200,000 cubic meters of earth were picked. Superintendent of the airport (Engineer) Javad Afaq said here Sunday that as much as 10 billion rials had been expended on the project, another 1.5 billion rials to be expended for complementary phases of the airport.

For the time being one flight from and another flight to the airport is made daily.

Sarakhs of Iran has also a railway linking this city with Sarakhs of Turkmen Republic across the border and hence to Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan that is to be inaugurated in June.

Iran: BAHMAN Weekly Reportedly Ceases Publication

LD0305123096 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 30 Apr 96 p2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — 'BAHMAN' weekly stopped its weekly publication after having only printed 17 issues, the daily Persian language 'SALAM' reported Sunday [28 April].

"The reason is still unknown, as we were unable to contact the editor-in-chief to this moment", 'SALAM' reported.

It said that 'BAHMAN', in its last issue, implied that it would cease publishing for good.

It said that: "Our weekly 'BAHMAN' has been attracting more sensitivity and attention than was expected. The interest of readers, editorial staff, journalists and writers in the weekly, all has put a great responsibility on the weekly's shoulders."

"The responsibility is so much that we eventually felt unable to continue coping with the task of maintaining the expected quality. We prefer to stop publishing rather than lower its quality."

Ata'ollah Mohajerani, managing director of the weekly 'BAHMAN', is the legal and parliamentary affairs' vice-president. 'BAHMAN' was quoted as saying that the subscription fee of subscribers will be refunded.

Iran: JAHAN-E ESLAM Seeks Investigation of Closure

LD0305164096 Tehran ASR-E MA in Persian 1 May p 1

["JAHAN-E ESLAM Newspaper Protests Ban" — unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a letter entitled: "report to the nation," the editorial council of the newspaper JAHAN-E ESLAM has called on the country's officials to investigate the "injustice" done against the newspaper through its closure during the last 15 months. [passage omitted]

Iran: Hezbollah Threatens Death to Women Refusing Islamic Dress

LD0305145096 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 1 May 96 p2

[Article: "Hezbollah Warns Women Who do Not Observe Islamic Dress Code"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of Ansar-e Hezbollah [Hezbollah Supporters] yesterday patrolled Tehran's Vali-ye Asr and Africa streets chanting slogans against bihejabs [women who do not observe the Islamic dress code]. In the streets, the group, comprising 10 motorcyclists and a vehicle, chanted such slogans as "Death to Bihejabs," "Husbands of Bihejabs Lack Zeal," and "This is Our Last Warning to Bihejabs."

According to an IRNA report, the group also stopped some women who were not observing the Islamic dress code and ordered them to adjust their clothing.

On the basis of this report, a number of women walking on the sidewalks whose attire did not exactly match the Islamic dress code changed course and headed for narrow side streets or tried to pull down their headscarves before the group reached them.

The group also stopped cars and demanded that their passengers observe the dress code.

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The group ended its patrol at 1800 yesterday by holding special prayers in Africa Street, while chanting "O God, hasten the lofty advent of the Lord of the Era [Hidden Imam]."

Pakistan

Pakistan: Leghari Returns to Islamabad After Pilgrimage to Mecca

BK0405100896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has returned to Islamabad after performing hajj. He was received at the airport by Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad and senior officials.

Pakistan: 'Indian Military Agents' Burn Down APHC Headquarters

BK0305134196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, the Indian military agents have burned down the headquarters of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] in Srinagar. According to KASHMIR MEDIA SERVICE correspondent, the upper story of the building was gutted and eight rooms destroyed. A Hurriyat Conference spokesman emphasized the APHC stand that it could not be deterred by such acts and would stick like a rock to the objective of the right of self- determination.

Meanwhile, there is no letup in Indian brutalities, and 16 more people have been killed by the troops. Ten people, including a woman, were killed when a house was fired upon by troops in Badarkot in Hindwara area. Another report said three people were gunned down by military agents in a village in Pulwama for their refusal to donate to the so-called election fund. The troops arsoned a house in the same area, burning alive a youth. Reports from Jammu said dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed in the border areas of the region, with warnings that those violating it would be shot dead.

Pakistan: Bhutto Blames India for Recent Bomb Blasts in Punjab

BK0405155296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the recent bomb blasts in Punjab are the result of terrorism by the Research and Analysis Wing [RAW]. Its activities are meant to divert world attention from the sham elections in occupied Kashmir. While briefing foreign correspondents in Islamabad, she said India has failed in holding elections for the six seats in the occupied area along with the elections in other parts of the country. The prime minister said that earlier there were many bomb blasts in Karachi at the behest of RAW, but that now it has turned toward Punjab as its target. She said: The proof for our suspicion and similar information on RAW have been obtained from our agencies.

Pakistan: Further on Bhutto Blaming India for Blasts, Regional Strain

BK0405163196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that recent blasts in the Punjab are the inspired acts of terrorism by RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] to divert world attention from sham elections in occupied Kashmir. She said at a briefing for foreign correspondents in Islamabad that India failed to hold elections to six seats in the disputed territory simultaneously with those being held in others parts of India. The prime minister said it was Karachi where RAW-inspired blasts were seen. After Karachi, she said, they turned their attention to the Punjab. The prime minister said: we suspect RAW on basis of evidence we have and reports received from our agencies.

Replying to a question, the prime minister said it was India, which was responsible for tension in the region. She said India has huge missile and nuclear program and hegemonistic designs. It has a history of intervention into the affairs of neighboring countries. She said Kashmir dispute would be resolved when India recognizes Kashmir as a problem and the issue was accepted as a separate item on the Indo-Pak agenda. The prime minister said India had inflicted three wars on Pakistan in one of which a sacred wing of Pakistan was lost.

Pakistan: Opposition Claims Foreign Minister Smuggled Drugs to UK

BK0505112796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 4 May 96 pp 1, 5

[Report by THE NATION correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LAHORE - Pakistan Muslim League (N) [PML (N)] has appealed to Chief of the Army Staff Gen Jehangir Karamat to hold inquiry through Military Intelligence (MI) against Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmed Ali on the charges of smuggling hashish to Britain and then refer the findings of the MI to the Supreme Court.

The Muslim League made this appeal through a Press conference addressed by its Punjab Information Secretary Pir Binyameen Rizvi at a local hotel on Friday [3

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May]. The British Government was also demanded to arrest S. Ahmed, Sardar Asif's agent in Birmingham to whom the consignment was to be sent and hold an open court trial. Asked why the PML(N) wanted the case only to be investigated by the Military Intelligence, he said 'no other government agency could be trusted in this particular case'. Said he: "How can we expect justice from the present government which has appointed MNA [Member of National Assembly] Munawar Manj as Chairman of the Parliament's Anti Narcotics Committee, within a year of his arrest. As for the aforementioned case, Binyameen said 195 kg hashish was packed in six cartons to smuggle to Britain through Asif Ahmed Ali's firm Messers Indus Valley but it was checked at Karachi port by the Customs staff.

The hashish packed cartons were placed with the cartons of export rice in a container which was transported to Karachi by a local courier service (TCS), he said. He claimed that Messers Indus Valley had sent several such consignments through TCS to Britain and many other European countries many times before.

The PML(N) leader further said the Indus Valley's containers were never checked by the Customs staff on the direction of the Foreign Minister but this time a new custom officer recently deputed at the Karachi Port insisted on checking the consignment despite having been warned that the container was owned by Sardar Asif's firm. He further said that the Custom officer immediately registered a case, ignoring instructions from Asif Ali Zardari to destroy hashish.

Binyameen said those customs officials were now being threatened by the government who recovered hashish.

He claimed that all the facts regarding the ownership of the firm as well as the involvement of Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali in drug trafficking are based on evidence and PML(N) was ready to face any punishment if anything proves wrong in the court of law.

Binyameen said that Muslim League will send the information regarding this case to all the diplomats in Pakistan, Britain and the Chief of Army Staff as well. He also appealed to the British diplomats to take serious notice of the issue.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister To Sue Over Drug Smuggling Allegations

BK0505143096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 5 May 96 pp 1, 13

[APP Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD - Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali will sue Provincial Information Secretary of PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)] Binyamin Rizvi, for his allegations against Sardar Asif Ali, of the drug smuggling.

In his Press statement, here on Saturday [4 May], Asif said, "the accusations made by Binyamin Rizvi, are blatantly defamatory, false and libelous. Accordingly, I have directed my counsel to initiate legal proceedings against such irresponsible utterances, under the law of the land."

Clarifying his position regarding the drug smuggling charges, Asif Ahmad Ali, said, "All I wish to say is that Binyamin Rizvi, is not just wrong, he is grossly and mischievously wrong in his accusations. In fact his charges have no roots in reality," he added.

He further said the M/s Indus Rice Mills (PVT) Lahore, a concern of his brother, in which neither he (Asif) nor any of his children are share holders, has been the victim of international smugglers planned scheme to transport Hashish under the grab of rice export.

Asif said, fortunately, due to the prompt efforts of the law enforcing agencies, the case has been thoroughly investigated and the main accused have been arrested. According to the findings of the investigating agencies, the gang has reportedly been involved in drug trafficking in the past as well as has now confessed doing the similar act of drug transportation with one Safa Rice Mill of Lahore, in the year 1993, he added.

He said, the position was amply clarified by the investigating agency through their Press release on May 03, 1996.

Pakistan: Qazi Hussain Meets Rabbani in Kabul

BK0505143296 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 5 May 96 p 1

[Report by Mohammad Ali Imran]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PESHAWAR, May 4: Jam'iyat-e Eslami chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed held talks with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and his military strongman, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in Kabul on Saturday [4 May] in his bid to pave way for holding of a broad-based Afghan moot inside Afghanistan.

The meeting was followed by conflicting reports that a formal agreement has been reached between the Afghan government and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan through the efforts of the Jam'iyat e-Eslami leader who has been shuttling between them for the last ten days. Reports also said several armed loyalists of Hezb-e Eslami were near the front line positions captured by the government forces and the Taleban around Kabul.

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But Hezb-e Eslami leader in Peshawar Dr. Arghandiwal, when contacted, denied the reports that their forces had found way to Kabul. However, he did not categorically refute the possibility of an agreement between the two Afghan groups. "Nothing is impossible," he laughingly said when asked about the reported agreement between the government and the Hezb.

Meanwhile, Taleban spokesman in Peshawar, Maulvi Ahmad Jan in a strongly worded statement Saturday, accused Hekmatyar of forging an alliance with the Rabbani government against the Taleban. He also claimed that the Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan forces had entered Kabul and that the joint forces of Rabbani and Hekmatyar were preparing for a massive attack on the student militia.

The Taleban spokesman said the talks between the Islamic movement and the Hezb-e Eslami were disrupted by Hekmatyar himself who demanded of the Taleban to surrender their positions to the Hezb forces so that a joint attack was launched on Kabul. This, he argued, was simply impossible for the student militia and that too, to a force which existed only in name. Maulvi Jan observed that the reported agreement between the Afghan government and the Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan was aimed at countering the youngsters. But this attempt would prove abortive as the Taleban were determined to get rid to the ruling coalition in Kabul at any cost, he added.

According to Afghan sources, the Jam'iyat-e Eslami chief in his separate meetings with President Rabbani and commander Mas'ud briefed them on his meetings with Hekmatyar and other Afghan leaders in Jalalabad. Qazi proposed that a joint meeting of all the Afghan leaders was inevitable for a national consensus on the long-standing issue.

PPI adds: According to Jam'iyat e-Eslami sources in Peshawar, Qazi put forth a number of suggestions on reaching a consensus among main factions for establishment of an interim set-up in Kabul acceptable to all the warring sides. The Taleban factor also came up under discussion with particular reference to the growing U.S. interest in the conflict.

Pakistan: Qazi Hussain in Kabul To Hold Peace Talks With Rabbani

BK0505115596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 4 May 96 p 1

[Report from THE NEWS Peshawar Bureau]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jam'iyat e-Eslami [JI] chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad has reached Kabul to resume talks with President Burhanoddin Rabbani with a view to bringing about reconciliation among rival Afghan groups.

Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] sources in Peshawar said Qazi Hussain straight away went to Kabul Thursday [2 May] but did not meet with Golbaddin Hekmatyar. They, however, added that the two would be holding talks in the days to come.

The Jam'iyat e-Eslami leader had returned to Pakistan before Eidul Azha after spending about a week in Afghanistan. His mission is to reconcile different Afghan mojahedin groups and leaders with one another.

The representatives of Rabbani and Hekmatyar have also been negotiating recently on forming a broadbased alliance but have yet to conclude an agreement.

It was learnt that Qazi Hussain would also try to meet the Taleban leaders and talk to them about a national reconciliation. In this effort, he is said to be seeking the help of JUI [Jam'iyat-i-Ulema] leader Senator Maulvi Samiul Haq, who is close to certain Taleban leaders.

Until now, the Taleban have refused to talk to Rabbani after having declared their leader Maulvi Mohammad Umar as Amirul Momineen. Instead, they have vowed to oust the Rabbani regime. Both Rabbani and the Taleban perceive Qazi Hussain Ahmad and his party as pro-Hekmatyar.

Pakistan: Indian Troops Violate Cease-Fire Line; 1 Killed

BK0605042596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two UN military observers—Uruguay's Major (Perez) and Finland's Maj. (Micko)—narrowly escaped when Indian troops fired from across the Line of Control at the Jabran Bridge in the Battal area of Azad Kashmir. Indian troops resorted to unprovoked firing when these UN observers were touring the area to investigate cease-fire violations.

Meanwhile, one woman was killed and four other civilians were injured in different incidents of indiscriminate firing by Indian troops at the Nauseri, Battal, and Nakial villages of Azad Kashmir. Pakistan has lodged complaints regarding these cease-fire violations by Indian troops with the UN military observer group.

Pakistan: Bhutto on CTBT, Ties With PRC, Iran

BK0505092796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said if India does not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] than neither shall Pakistan. Talking

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to foreign correspondents in Islamabad yesterday, she said Pakistan has always advocated regional peace. She said: To realize this objective, we have made a number of proposals, one of which was declaring the region a nuclear-free zone; however, India has not responded positively to these proposals. Regarding the current elections in India, the prime minister said Pakistan does not have any favorites; however, she said that she would prefer a man of vision who could help solve the Kashmir issue. She said the Kashmir dispute could only be solved when India recognizes it is a problem and accepts it a separate item on the Pakistan-India agenda.

In response to a query, the prime minister said the recent bomb blasts in Punjab are the result of terrorist acts by the Research and Analysis Wing [RAW]. They are aimed at diverting the attention of the international community from the sham elections in occupied Kashmir. She said first it was Karachi where RAW-inspired bomb blasts occurred. After Karachi, she said, they turned their attention toward Punjab. The prime minister said RAW was suspected based on evidence and reports that we have received from our agencies.

Regarding Pakistan's relations with other countries, the prime minister said there has been improvement in our ties with Afghanistan. Benazir Bhutto said Pakistan enjoys good relations with China and Iran. On China, she said: Our relationship has grown from people to people, leader to leader, and generation to generation. She said both countries believe in the noninterference of others internal affairs, they honor each other's stance, and support peace and progress.

Referring to her upcoming visit to Sweden, the prime minister said she would apprise Sweden and the Scandinavian countries of the regional situation, including the Kashmir dispute. She said Pakistan's positive proposal for regional nuclear disarmament should also find wider appreciation in Sweden. The prime minister said Pakistan and Sweden have identical views on a number of important regional and international issues. Benazir Bhutto said her recent visits to Syria and Bahrain yielded positive results. More commodities have been identified for bilateral trade with Syria and efforts made to eliminate the system of double taxation in Bahrain. It was agreed that Pakistani companies would be listed on the stock exchange in Bahrain.

On the country's economic performance, she said during our present term, the budget deficit has been reduced by 40 percent. Investments worth $2.10 billion have come into Pakistan in the last two years as against total investment of $2 billion in the past 20 years. About the privatization policy, the prime minister said the task of privatization has been carried out in an extremely transparent manner. The prime minister said we are trying our best to serve the people to the maximum by adopting better policies and strategies.

Responding to a question, Benazir Bhutto said contacts between the government and Altaf Group have not broken down. She said there has been tangible, albeit slow, progress toward a solution to the Karachi problem.

Pakistan: Iranian Envoy Says U.S. Terrorism Report Attempt 'To Malign Islam'

BK0505130896 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 3 May 96 p 14

[Article by Sikander Hayat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Akhondzadeh on Thursday [2 May] described the United States report on international terrorism an attempt to malign Islam and urged the Muslim countries to "join hands to defeat this conspiracy".

Reacting to the contents of report, which declares five Muslim countries including Iran as promoters of terrorism, the ambassador said: "If there is a country that is terrorist then it is Israel, but not in the eyes of the United States." Indeed, the U.S. is not ashamed at the unabashed Israeli terrorism in Lebanon, he added.

Ambassador Akhondzadeh rejected the contents of U.S. report, entitled 'Patterns of Global Terrorism 1995', saying Iran has always condemned terrorism of "all kinds". He said even today United States is giving shelter to a number of Iranian terrorists who committed murders in order to fail the Islamic Revolution.

The 24-page report, made available here to the media by the USIS, covers what it calls acts of international terrorism in 51 countries including Pakistan. It also gives thumb-nail sketches of a very large number of terrorist organizations, about half a dozen of which are said to be operating or drawing sustenance from Pakistan.

But, possibly to the great chagrin of Pakistan Government a conspicuous miss from the list of terrorist outfits is the name of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM]. The nearest reference, though emphatically indirect, of the MQM is the sentence that "Pakistan claims that India provides support for separatists in Sindh Province, especially in Karachi". The killings of the two U.S. Consulate employees last March has been attributed to "unknown gunmen".

One clear message that the report gives is that United States has come under increasing threat of international terrorism. During 1955, terrorist attacks against the U.S. interests rose from 66 in 1994 to 99 in 1995 and the

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number of U.S. citizens killed rose from four to 12. This is all the more important when the total number of fatalities from international terrorism declined from 314 in 1994 to 165 in 1995; though more were injured mainly because of the massive number of injuries in the gas attack in a Tokyo subway.

The report says that Pakistan continues to experience terrorist- related violence as a result of "domestic conflicts and instability in Afghanistan". "Pakistan claimed that the current Afghan regime was behind a spate of bombings in the Peshawar area in October and November. Pakistan claims that India provides support for separatists in Sindh Province, especially in Karachi where terrorism and other violence resulted in over 100 deaths each month during 1995".

The report also makes a mention of the failed army coup, citing reports that Harakat-ul-Ansar (HUA) was involved in an "arms smuggling ring with Pakistani military officers accused of plotting to overthrow the Bhutto government." At another place the report also talks of "Pakistan's discovery through subsequent investigations that Ramzi Yusuf had plotted to assassinate Prime Minister Bhutto".

Pakistan: Islamic Organization Denies Claims in U.S. Terrorism Report

BK0505153396 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 5 May 96 pp 1,9

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] ISLAMABAD — In one of its recent reports, the U.S. State Department called Quranic Open University 'Jama'at-ul-Fuqara' and claimed it was involved in terrorist activities. The Quranic Open University issued a statement clarifying that the organization's aim is to propagate the teachings of the Koran all over the world. The U.S. CIA and the Zionist lobby has named the Quranic Open University 'Jama'at-ul-Fuqara' and has leveled charges of terrorism against it. Mohammad Ali Qadri Amriki is a correspondent for THE ISLAMIC POST, a newsletter of the Quranic Open University. He issued a statement, on behalf of the Quranic Open University, that said the Zionist forces who control the U.S. State Department want to establish an international Zionist State in the name of the New World Order. He said they have launched contemptuous propaganda against other religions. The statement added that the New World Order is actually a plan to establish Zionist control all over the world. It says that the Muslims and Christians who believe in God present a great obstacle for this Zionist design.

Shiekh Mubarak Jillani has established the Quranic Open University, which spreads the teachings of Islam all over the world. Branches have also been established in the United States. The Zionist-controlled U.S. Department of State also claims these branches are involved in terrorist activities. The Quranic Open University statement says that the Muslims of the world — including the Muslims of Kashmir, Bosnia, and Chechnya — are fighting the war for liberation, but the pro-Zionist international media and the U.S. Government call it terrorism. The statement adds that Pakistan is a main target of the Zionists. According to the statement, General Zia ul-Haq was killed by a Zionist conspiracy after the Zionists had no need for him. The destruction of Ojri Camp [an ammunition depot in Rawalpindi, which blew up in April 1988], the civil war in Afghanistan, and the nefarious designs to make Kashmir a U.S. base against China are all parts of the same Zionist plot.

The Zionist clique has assassinated many U.S. Muslims and demolished many mosques. The Zionist-controlled press have tried to blame Shiekh Mubarak Jillani and his followers for the assassination of Maulana Farooqi in Phildosnia. This is just part of the Zionist conspiracy. U.S. authorities ordered Pakistani intelligence agencies to keep strict vigilance on Shiekh Mubarak's residence, but these agencies have since admitted that could not find any evidence against the Shiekh.

Pakistan: Nation Shares Similar Terrorist Experiences With Israel

BK0505124596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 4 May 96 p 1

[Article by Kamran Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KARACHI: For four consecutive days in February this year the senior Pakistani law enforcement officials sat across the table with top brass of the Israeli intelligence services (Mossad, Shin Beit) and shared experience in combatting the menace of terrorism in their respective countries, according to the official and diplomatic sources.

The occasion was a 23-nation conference on counter-terrorism held in Bughio City, Philippines from February 18-21 this year. For a micro level discussion over counter-terrorism tactics the organizers divided the participants into small sub-groups where Pakistan was placed with Israel, Philippines and Britain.

The two nations, although got engaged in such a deliberation for the first time in their history, made no official mention of this development for the obvious sensitivities attached to the subject. Unlike most of the important Muslim countries of the world the Government of Pakistan has no relations with the State of Israel. In what could be labelled as a historic development, in several

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one-on-one sessions during the conference two senior major generals and three brigadiers of the Israeli Intelligence met the senior Pakistani officials to listen and explain their respective methods and strategies to deal with the worse wave of terrorism facing the two nations, said the three Pakistani officials who attended the conference in separate background interviews.

The Pakistani delegation to the conference was headed by additional director general, FIA [Federal Investigation Agency]. Other members of the delegation included a joint director from the Intelligence Bureau and three deputy inspector generals drawn out from the Police Service of Pakistan.

An informed official underlined the fact that the government had decided to send the delegation to this conference despite a strict ban on sending big delegations to foreign conferences and the 'Id festival in the country.

"Pakistani participants presented an elaborate account of their battle against terrorists in Karachi and about their efforts to weed out terrorists of Arab origin from various parts of the country," informed a participant. The Israelis for their part explained threats facing their country from the Iran backed groups such as Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Hezbollah," he added.

To tell you very frankly it was a great experience talking the hard-core professionals from Israel. They are definitely best in the world and Pakistan being one of the worst-hit country needs to learn a lot from the Israeli experience," confided another Pakistani participant to the conference.

This view, however, doesn't strike a similar chord in other security circles where strong doubts persist about the real Israeli interest in Pakistan, largely considered as a big threat to the Jewish state because of its nuclear capabilities. Israeli hard-liners have often demanded the total destruction of Pakistan's nuclear facilities.

Israel's best known intelligence service Mossad is also known to have first rate relationship with India's RAW [Research and Analysis Wing], causing deep concern in Pakistani security institution. Pakistan has solid evidence to suggest that the Israeli services provide active support to the Indian Government in its fight against its own Muslim population, particularly in the Indian-held Kashmir.

A top security official, when contacted by this correspondent for his reaction on this dramatic development, informed that he was not aware of any decision at the government level to initiate security ties with Israel. "Its a sensitive subject and we're trying to learn more about the developments made in Bughio City", he remarked.

Pakistan: Bhutto's Nuclear Statement 'Positive Gesture' Toward India

BK0505124396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 4 May 96 p 7

[Editorial: "Regional Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto did no more than state an ineluctable premise that Pakistan will neither disarm unilaterally nor abandon its nuclear programme without a regional nuclear regime. It was a clear message for India that there could be no peace settlement in South Asia that was not balanced by an equivalent security arrangement. The two conditions are complimentary to each other, the latter being a sine quo non for the former.

The thrust of what the Prime Minister said was not that Pakistan was determined to keep up with the neighbors in an arms race regardless of the financial burden it entailed, but that disarmament was possible if the solution underwrote real peace in the region. Even the superpowers had to reach a clutch of agreements after prolonged negotiations that helped to bring down the scale of confrontation, when their nuclear and space weapons reduction maintained a balance with their decreasing security interests. The gravamen of any settlement devolves on the principle of parity between that what is to be gained to what is to be lost. Verbal assurances really carry no weight if these are not backed by tangible guarantees.

India, surprisingly still believes that peace is possible in the region even as it continues to build its war machine. It has already graduated from conventional arms to enter the broad spectrum missile and nuclear weapons field, and is on its way to rival the established powers in these technologies. The possibility of ending regional tension in such a situation therefore is in reverse proportion to India's unbridled arms race. Peace consequently is no longer relevant, and other states, particularly Pakistan have no alternative but to join the race.

The key to peace in South Asia is held by India, not by design but because it introduced the spectre of a doomsday war by initiating work on producing nuclear weapons and a family of missile systems. These developments ended the age of innocence of both sides when they relied on conventional war materiel during their three conflicts. The fourth one, for which Delhi seems to be frantically preparing, materially and rhetorically, will be fought with weapons that would spell the end of this region. But even if that feared war does not take place, the burden of preparing for it and the tension it will unleash, will be sufficient to cause irreversible socio-economic damage to the states.

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One of the factors responsible for the pervasive, endless grinding poverty in the region is that too much of its precious resources are channeled into building military muscles.

It was in this context that Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto offered the only viable solution possible to end the mad arms race and contain the nuclear programme. She did not throw down a challenge but made a statement that if peace is desired it must be accompanied by a positive gesture that would ensure the states' security interests.

Pakistan: Meeting Discusses Sale, Transportation of Arms, Ammunition

BK0505145596 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 5 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister for interior, Mr. Nasirullah Khan Babar, has said ban on transportation of arms and ammunition has helped in combating acts of terrorism. He was presiding over a meeting in Islamabad today. The meeting discussed matters relating to sale of arms and ammunition and their transportation within the country. The interior minister said effective and vigilant enforcement of ban had greatly helped in easing the overall law and order situation in the country. It was decided in the meeting to constitute a committee comprising representatives of interior division and governments of NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] and Punjab, which will submit its recommendations regarding unauthorized arms factories operating in the NWFP and tribal areas.

Pakistan: Strike Announced in Kashmir for Election Day

BK0405135496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 4 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] All Parties Hurriyat Conference has announced total strike in held Kashmir on Tuesday [7 May], the polling day for the fraudulent elections in Jammu and Ladakh. The announcement was made at a press conference in Srinagar today by senior Hurriyat leaders — Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone, Syed Ali Shah Gilani, Mohammad Yasin Malik, Maulana Abbas Ansari, Professor Abdul Ghani Butt, and Nayim Ahmad Khan. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders said polls by India is a futile attempt to hoodwink world opinion. Holding separate polls in Jammu and Ladakh on 7 May, they said, is part of the conspiracy to divide the state on communal basis; therefore, total strike would be held all across occupied Kashmir on Tuesday against this act of perfidy. They expressed sharp reaction against forcibly transporting government employees for election duty. They said the authorities forcibly put government employees on vehicles and drove them to Jammu and Ladakh. The Hurriyat leaders appealed to the international community to take serious notice of the tyrannies to which the people of Kashmir are being subjected.

Meanwhile, military crackdowns and siege and search operations have been increased in Kashmir valley and Doda District in Jammu region in view of the proposed fake polls for the six parliamentary seats in occupied Kashmir. Reports from Islamabad said extensive crackdowns were carried out in many areas of the district. Reports from Doda say the extremist Hindu organization, Shiv Sena, has unleashed a reign of terror in the district. These extremist Hindus are now reported to be engaged in victimizing Muslim people.

Pakistan: Bhutto Rules Out Possibility of Midterm Elections

BK0605042396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister has ruled out any possibility of midterm elections, saying that the present assembly will complete its term and elections will only be held on schedule. Addressing a Pakistan Democratic Front [PDF] parliamentary meeting in Islamabad yesterday, Benazir Bhutto said she wants to see the system strengthened. She urged the parliamentarians to ensure the maintenance of law and order and the execution of development work in their respective areas. She disclosed that some opposition members have contacted her and said they are ready to extend cooperation and support to the government in all matters if it is ensured that midterm polls will be held. She said she is in favor of strengthening the country's democratic institutions.

Briefing newsmen, Izhar Amrohvi, the Pakistan People's Party parliamentary spokesman, said that the prime minister congratulated the PDF members because the current government has spent more time in power than the previous three governments. She asked them to send a monthly report to her on the law and order situation and the pace of development work in their respective areas.

Pakistan: Imran Khan Interviewed on Local Politics

BK0305151696 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 27 Apr 96 pp 1, 7

[Report on interview with Imran Khan, leader of Tehrik-i-Insaf, by JANG panel in Lahore — date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehrik-i-Insaf [movement for justice] Leader Imran Khan has said that Benazir Bhutto should appoint a "neutral umpire" and then see who

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tampers with the [cricket] ball. The Supreme court should act as the neutral umpire and give its ruling. I have entered politics after seriously thinking about it. I made the decision after I became confident that I could bring about changes in this country. I will not enter into election alliances with anyone to grab power or be involved in the politics of intrigue. I will not contest the election only to secure 10 or 15 seats. I will enter the political arena when I have the strength to bring about a complete change, and this strength will be manifested through youths. Bhutto too was supported by youths.

After the separation of the judiciary and the executive, the State Bank should now demand for autonomy. As an institution, the Supreme Court too has strengthened its position, which is beneficial to democracy. Other institutions should follow its example.

It is wrong to accuse the United States of interfering in the country's internal affairs. The Unites States has never said that politicians should exploit the country or commit injustice. I fail to understand the reason behind Nawaz Sharif relinquishing his position as the prime minister. I do not know what the Army does. I will ask Sharif why he resigned from the prime minister's post when his government was reinstated by the Supreme Court.

Since I announced the movement, many people have secretly made contact in order to join it. Most of them are from the Pakistan People's Party [PPP], followed by Pakistan Muslim League [PML], with the fewest from Jam'iyat-e-Eslami. These views were expressed by Imran Khan during an interview with a JANG panel comprising Parvez Bashir, Raees Ansari, Arman Ehsan, and Khaleda Yusuf.

In reply to a question, Imran Khan said that no party in Pakistan practices democracy. The leader becomes king and appoints people of his choice. I am under pressure from the people, they want to join us. However, I am not in a hurry. I will judiciously appoint the officials of the movement.

When asked when he plans to transform his movement into a party, he said, God willing, this year or even in a few months, adding that he would announce the names of a few personnel within the next two weeks.

Speaking about discipline after the party is formed, he said that besides him there were many captains of Pakistan's cricket team. However, no one had been selected on the basis of merit. I was the only captain who resigned twice for the sake of principles. He added that major political parties want to do some good work, but cannot because of the members of assemblies from those parties. These members pursue their own interests and prevent any change.

He said everyone speaks against the feudal system and of introducing an agricultural tax, however, they cannot do anything. This is a flaw in the system. He said election is not imminent. We will bring about changes when we have completed preparations in this regard because I do not believe in assuming power from the back door and from manipulation. If it were so, then I could have done that when offers were made to me during the Ziaul Haq, PML, and Moin Qureshi governments. An indirect offer was also made by the PPP.

On making the election system fair, Imran Khan said the Election Commission should be strong like its Indian counterpart. This, should provide equal opportunity to everyone and strictly implement the election laws. The main problem in our country is that no one believes that elections here are held in an impartial manner. He said that there has been considerable change in the people's political attitude and consciousness. The democratic system of government operating for the last eight years have enabled the people to distinguish between good and bad. The free press has played a dominant role in this regard.

Answering a question about his party's prospects, Imran Khan said that when Bhutto contested in the election, a government officer told me in my home that she could not win. However, the results showed that she made a sweep. Khan said that in the beginning, he was a great Bhutto fan. In reply to a question, he said the people want a change. Inflation has not only affected the cities but the rural areas as well.

On curtailing the defense budget, Khan said that I cannot give an opinion on this matter as I do not know how much Pakistan's security is threatened. I suggest that investments be increased instead of curtailing the defense budget. He said that the prime minister may make any number of foreign trips as she wishes. However, she has been unable to increase investments because not only is corruption rampant here, the 20 percent bank interest rate is also very high, compared to only 0.5 percent in Japan.

Khan said only a handful of persons can secure high positions on their own. I am also one of them and did everything on my own.

On a question about the bomb blast at his cancer hospital, Imran Khan said evidence indicates that I too would have been blown up by the blast. He said that on the day of the blast, Nasim Sahgal [not further identified], was scheduled to visit the hospital at 1200.

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However, at 0930 he telephoned saying that he would be visiting at 1530. If he had visited the hospital earlier, he would certainly have been a victim. I cannot, however, say that the blast was an attempt on my life. [sentence as published]

About political parties, he said that the two major parties openly committed corruption with both of them having plundered banks. This is shown by the fact that bank chiefs are replaced whenever there is a change of government. Heads of other organizations are also changed to make it easy for these politicians to misappropriate government money.

In reply to a question on women and their rights, Khan said upper class women in Pakistan enjoy greater rights than their foreign counterparts. In the United States, one million women are raped every year. However, here, the government was about to fall over the Veena Hayat rape case. This was because she was a member of high society. If she belonged to the lower class then nothing would have happened. He said that women will be given their full rights.

When asked to elucidate what system he will himself set up if he challenges the entire existing systems, Imran Khan said that by scrupulously adhering to the existing Constitution, we can achieve social and economic justice. However, unfortunately, he added, nobody works according to the provisions of the Constitution in this country. How many of our assembly members are men of good character? How many of them have not spent millions of rupees to secure a seat in the assembly? Parliament has been reduced to a domain of a particular section which sits there only to protect their own interests. He said on the question of separating the judiciary from the executive, the government wanted to assert its authority, but the Supreme Court remained steadfast. This augurs well for our democracy. Our State Bank should also emulate this and demand for autonomy. Since there is no financial control in this country, whosoever comes into power squanders money like the great Mughal kings, considering it to be his own money.

On the Kashmir problem, Imran Khan said the issue should be resolved according to the UN resolutions of 1948. The views of the Kashmiri people should be ascertained through a referendum. The Kashmiris, in my opinion, want Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. All the letters I have received from the Kashmiris do not [as published] suggest Kashmir's annexation with Pakistan.

Imran Khan said Pakistan's nuclear policy should be such that can best guarantee the security of the country, because if there is no security, there will be no independence. He said he cannot understand the government's energy policy. Can Pakistani citizens pay as much as their Canadian counterparts for electricity? When asked why he abandoned his mass education program, Imran Khan said he did so because the government had started to fear that he was paving the ground to enter politics, even though he was working under the aegis of the government. How could I have continued such a major project when the government itself did not help me ? In this country, even deputy commissioners of small districts behave like gods. None can enter the district against their will. They are so powerful that nobody would dare invite their wrath. I tried my best to run the program but the government was creating obstacles in my way. That is why I abandoned it, thinking that now I have to launch a program to change the entire system itself.

About his criticism of the present government, Imran Khan said it was his democratic right. Which democracy prohibits people from not speaking out against corruption? I think it is a sin to keep quiet on such matters. If that is not so, the government should itself declare that it is not democratic, that in stead it is a Stalinist system of government or a dictatorship like Ziaul Haq's regime. I did not lose my citizenship by building a cancer hospital. As a citizen of this country, it is my democratic right to express my views on every issue.

When asked if he will contest elections, the Tehrik-i-Insaf chief said we will first assess our strength, because if we know that we are going to win only 10-15 seats, then it would be better not to contest elections. He said forging alliance with any political party is not possible because we want a total change. Of course, if someone wants to help us, he is welcome to come forward. When asked as to which party's vote bank he would be cutting in elections, he said he will not depend on any one party's votes. This thinking is wrong because now there is no difference in the ideologies of different parties. They are all Pakistanis. The talk about the left-wing or right-wing parties is merely to hoodwink the people. There is no difference at all in the manifestos of the two. Politics has now been reduced to a game of personalities only. Both these parties pursue pro-privatization and pro-U.S. policies. The people have become disenchanted with both of them. Are not the supporters of the Pakistan People's Party being hit hard by rising prices? Are not they tired of injustices? Khan asked.

Answering a question, Imran Khan said he is himself astonished at the coverage given by Pakistan Television to his news conference. He said he was rather happy about that. He said by giving this coverage, the government has given him a message that he must come into politics because he will cut Nawaz Sharif's votes. He said: You will be surprised to know that when I announced the formation of the Tehrik-i-Insaf, a large

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number of PPP workers had expressed their willingness to join us. He added that after he opened the cancer hospital, he was treated so harshly by the government that he decided to enter politics with full determination and vigor. He said the existing system has remained unchanged because whosoever comes into power, he tries to use it for his own benefits. He said I shall not promise giving election tickets to any of the politicians, members of national assembly or members of the provincial assembly who will join our movement. There will be no membership fees for joining my Tehrik-i-Insaf.

Answering another question, the Tehrik-i-Insaf chief said the politics of left, right, and fundamentalism is nothing but to hoodwink the people. This is all fraud. Policies of all these parties are identical. He said in politics he has been influenced by Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia and Mohammad Ali Jinnah and poet Iqbal in Pakistan.

About improving the Karachi situation, Imran Khan said he is against violence. Nothing can be settled through guns. He wants that the local people of Karachi be given their full rights. They should be given representation in local body institutions, and for this, elections should be held in Karachi without any delay. Otherwise, the unrest found in Karachi will adversely affect the situation in the entire country. According to the democratic principle, all citizens should be given their due rights. The reason for the fall of East Pakistan was that the local people of that region were not given their due rights. There was also no democracy there. He said martial law is bad because it goes against democracy. About the Kalabagh dam, Imran Khan said he cannot say anything about it now. However, he will definitely say one thing that whatever is done should be in the best interest of Pakistan .

Answering yet another question, Imran Khan said since I have just begun my political journey, I am not competing with either Nawaz Sharif or Benazir Bhutto. However, this is well-known that the people are tired of and disenchanted with both of them and are now turning toward me in desperation. They are doing so because, perhaps, they trust me, and they trust me because they know that there is no inconsistency in my word and deed.

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